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JUDAISM

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THE RADICAL PERSUASION IN AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

Stephen J. Whitfield

THE UGLY JEW AND THE CRY FOR NORMALCY

Lothar Kahn

SOME DIFFICULTIES IN DIALOGUE

Henry Bamberger

RETHINKING ZIONISM

William Kluback

RABBI KOOK, THE ARABS AND THE JAPANESE

Ben Zion Bokser

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a worldview on the issues that are timeless—the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

Judaism will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God." *From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Renaissance of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.*

First Reader

Jews = Liberals

It has long been noted that modern Jews tend to have an affinity with liberal and even radical causes. The reasons for this relationship have been analyzed from every point of view, being either praised or lamented, depending upon the perspective of the observer.

In his paper, "The Radical Persuasion in American Jewish History" *Stephen J. Whitfield* traces the history of this relationship both in the United States and abroad. He suggests that many who had used their liberalism or radicalism as a substitute for Judaism are now finding their Jewishness a precious and irreplaceable element in their lives, whether or not they preserve their left-of-center stance in social and political issues.

Self-hatred and Self-analysis

The entrance of the modern Jew into general society has all too often been accompanied by the phenomenon generally called by its German name, *Selbsthass*, or "self hatred." Its early manifestations could be seen with the children of Moses Mendelssohn, all but one of whom forsook the faith of their fathers in the search for greener pastures. The psychological mechanism was studied by the German-Jewish sociologist, Theodor Lessing, who was later assassinated by the Nazis.

It has been a truism that "Jewish self-hatred" is an evil, with no redeeming features. In his paper, "The Ugly Jew and the Cry for Normalcy," Lothar Kahn analyzes its manifestations, pointing out that, in many instances, they were, to be sure, purely negative. However, in other cases, they served as a spur to Jewish self-discovery and renewal. The most striking instance is the career of Theodor Herzl.

Scholars Look at Hasidism

The Winter 1983 issue of JUDAISM contained a paper by *Samuel H. Dresner* entitled, "The Contribution of Abraham Joshua Heschel." Heschel was, of course, a deeply committed student and interpreter of Hasidism. In this regard, he was one of a small, but distinguished company of scholars.

In his paper in the current issue, "Hasidism Through the Eyes of Three Masters," Dresner surveys Heschel's approach to Hasidism as well as that of two other outstanding men, Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem, and evaluates their distinctive contributions.

What Is Zionism?

Very few elements in Jewish experience are simple, and Zionism is surely not one of them. Its far-reaching character, both as a world view and as a movement, has evoked many distinct and contradictory interpretations.

Some have seen Zionism simply as an extension of traditional Jewish messianism, extrapolated in modern terms. Others have recognized in it a radical modification of Jewish history, while retaining many links with the past. The distinguished Israeli political scientist, Shlomo Avineri, adopts a far more uncompromising position. For him, Zionism is a total negation of the Diaspora, both past and present. To be true to its destined role, the State of Israel must represent a thorough-going social and moral revolution, no less than a new political reality. The ideal of social justice, embodied in socialism, is, therefore, inseparable for Avineri from true Zionism.

Obviously, much in the present State of Israel falls far short of the standard. In our days, following the war in Lebanon, many sensitive men and women have entered a period of soul searching with regard to the moral dimensions of the State of Israel. Avineri's approach was articulated before the war, and is more comprehensive than merely a reaction to the violence of this conflict.

William Kluback, in his paper, "Rethinking Zionism: The Challenge of Shlomo Avineri," presents an introduction to the world view of a significant Israeli thinker of our times.

The Editor, who finds himself strongly drawn to Avineri's moral vision, would enter only one demurrer — for reasons not difficult to comprehend. Avineri's concept of the Diaspora, past and present, may be overly simplified and, by that token it may fail to do justice both to its variety and its capacity to contribute to the social and moral goals to which Avineri gives his allegiance.

A New Approach to Christianity

While Jews have long — and legitimately — called for a better understanding of Judaism by Christians for many theoretical and practical reasons, there has not been an equal recognition that Jews need an understanding of Christianity and not merely good-will toward Christians.

In his paper, "Some Difficulties in Dialogue," *Henry Bamberger* analyzes the various Jewish approaches to Christianity now current and finds them wanting. He stresses the need for a Jewish theology of Christianity,

as well as the difficulties confronting such an enterprise. He offers a few preliminary guidelines for the task.

Gentle Advice From Rabbi Kook

Living traditions, like individuals, have their greater and their lesser periods. At its highest, Judaism was able to hold in balance the two poles of particularism and universalism, its concern with the character and destiny of the Jewish people on the one hand, and its involvement in the destiny of mankind as a whole on the other. Thus, the greatest of the biblical prophets, the Talmudic sages and the medieval and modern scholars, were able to keep these two goals in creative tension with each other, thereby enriching the content of their life and thought. Lesser figures found this task difficult if not impossible, and tended to adopt one of the two ideals, excluding or minimizing the other.

In modern times, one of the few exemplars of this broader vision in Judaism was Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of Palestine under the British Mandate. *Ben Zion Bokser* presents a translation of three of Rabbi Kook's letters, which we have titled, "Jews, Arabs and Japanese." I believe that our readers will find the human sympathy and understanding that they reveal relevant as well as interesting today.

Buber's Debt

A long time ago the first Jewish philosopher, Koheleth, reminded us "that there is nothing new under the sun." Nevertheless, originality and creativity have always been highly prized. The greatest of thinkers and artists never arise in a vacuum, but are indebted to their predecessors, if only for honing the instruments of the craft.

In her paper, "Buber and Ebner: Intellectual Cross-Fertilization Between a Catholic and a Jew," *Rivka Horwitz* calls attention to the striking similarity between the Catholic thinker, Friedrich Ebner, and the Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber. She suggests that Buber was indebted to his older contemporary for the crucial insight embodied in the "I — Thou" concept.

We Must Think For Ourselves

That Jews are the heirs of a rich and varied tradition hardly needs to be demonstrated. What is often lost sight of, however, is that everyone, even the most vociferous defender of tradition, must inevitably pick and choose among the different and even contradictory elements to be found in this extensive corpus.

In his paper, "Thinking In Our Ancestors' Categories," *Jakob J. Petuchowski* suggests that there are some elements in Jewish tradition which derive, to be sure, from biblical and rabbinic sources, but neverthe-

less are no longer appropriate for Jews living in the twentieth century. The implication of his essay is that reverence for tradition need not mean slavish adherence to every detail within it.

What Does The Future Hold?

Through the centuries the faith in the Messiah has been a fundamental element in Jewish belief. In the latter half of the twentieth century it has taken on new force and significance.

Jacob B. Agus, in his paper, "The Messianic Ideal and the Apocalyptic Vision," analyzes messianism in the biblical, rabbinic and medieval eras and points out that there have always been two distinct concepts in the tradition.

Interesting as this analysis of the past undoubtedly is, it gains practical significance in our day as Jews, both in the State of Israel and in the Diaspora, confront their future and, in the process, seek to achieve a vision that will be both credible and life-giving.

More Than a Remnant Was Saved

One of the most far reaching events in Jewish history has received relatively little attention — the one hundredth anniversary of the beginning of mass Jewish immigration to America from Eastern Europe.

This tide of human beings, which brought hundreds of thousands to these shores within two or three decades after 1881, radically transformed the character of the Jewish community in America. Viewed from the perspective of our day, a hundred years later, this migration was providential in saving the Jewish people from the total extinction which would have overtaken them had they, or their parents and grandparents, remained in Europe.

The characteristics of this unparalleled mass movement from Tsarist oppression to American freedom, and the consequences are discussed by *Joseph Edelman* in his paper, "The Centenary of Jewish Immigration to the United States: 1881-1981."

This World Is Not The Only One

The human desire for "another chance" never seems to disappear. When it is tied to the notion that there is a moral responsibility to finish what has been left undone in this world one arrives at the concept of *gilgul*, which *S. Daniel Breslauer* discusses in his paper, "The Ethics of *Gilgul*."

God Has Many Aspects

"Sufferance is the badge of our tribe," the Jew declares in *The Merchant of Venice*. More prosaically and precisely, William Orbach describes the condition of the Jew as being overwhelmingly a state of powerlessness

in the presence of his enemies. This social-political situation has had a fundamental impact on the content of Jewish faith.

William Orbach, in his paper, "The Four Faces of God," points out that ancient and medieval Jewish literature approaches God as the Savior, the Avenger and the Redeemer. In the face of the Nazi Holocaust, another aspect — God as powerless in the face of evil — begins to assume a central role in the thought of some modern theologians. This concept, the source of which may be found in the Midrash and the Kabbalah, remains significant as a psychological refuge or as a symbol of our value system. God's powerlessness has its parallel in man's helplessness, a mood widespread in our day.

As readers ponder the implications of "The Four Faces of God" it may be pointed out that modern man is not necessarily forced into passivity and despair. The Kabbalists emphasized that God's withdrawal from the world was voluntary, thus calling upon man to the task of *tikkun*, the repairing of the imperfections of the world. Jewish philosophy stressed the concept of man's freedom — and, therefore, his obligation — to act, since God had voluntarily accorded a role for man to function in the world. Neither the horrors that the Jew has undergone through the centuries, culminating in the Holocaust, nor the annihilation which threatens humanity in a nuclear age, compel us to belief in God's powerlessness and man's helplessness. Quite the contrary — "It is time to act for God; they have violated your Law" (Psalm 119:126).

Two Aspects of the Holocaust

In the first years following the Nazi Holocaust, that moral and physical catastrophe was greeted almost completely by silence on the part of creative artists, writers and scholars. Then, a small trickle of articles and books began to appear, which grew into a stream and is now a mighty tide. It is inevitable that, with hundreds of treatments of the Holocaust, from every conceivable perspective, the writing will run the gamut from the superb to the bathetic.

While it is manifestly impossible to discuss more than a fraction of the literature — even its best representatives — in our column, two very interesting books are the subject of *Hans O. Tiefel's* "Lessons from the Holocaust." As a believing and sensitive Christian, he analyzes two works, one psychological and the other theological, with sympathy and candor. At least by implication, his essay raises some questions with regard to unsolved problems in the area of Jewish-Christian theological dialogue.

R.G.

The Radical Persuasion In American Jewish History

STEPHEN J. WHITFIELD

ANY EXPLORATION OF THE RADICAL COMMITMENTS of American Jews is necessarily an appeal to the historical record, and ought to begin with the moment when modern European society eroded the walls of the ghetto. That moment has been conveniently dated as 1743, when the hunchbacked philosopher Moses Mendelssohn entered Berlin at the Jews' Gate. The guards' log book fails, of course, to emphasize the auspiciousness of the episode, noting only that "today there passed through. . . [the gate] six oxen, seven pigs, one Jew."¹ Ever since then, the civil societies of the West have had to define the place of a peculiar minority in their midst and, beginning with Mendelssohn, Jews have been required to choose between the particular and the universal, between religion and secularism, between ethnic loyalties and wider allegiances. Some civil orders, most importantly the United States, never bothered to distinguish Jews from other religious groups or to endow ethnicity with corporate status; elsewhere, especially in eastern Europe, many of their brethren emerged slowly, if at all, from their ethnic enclaves. But after many centuries as outcasts, the Jews were, on occasion, to become a searing political problem, and were themselves to be confronted with unprecedented political choices and opportunities.

The historical meaning of the radical option in the United States is the theme of this essay. Any historian on the trail of so elusive a term as radicalism must march past the bleached bones of scholars who earlier expired before defining it fully. But it can be distinguished from liberalism, which has entangled a dedication to representative government under law and to individual rights with a defense of capitalist organization and private property. Liberalism has generally conferred the greatest prestige upon the value of liberty, while radicalism has been egalitarian in its primary impulses. Since the eighteenth century those impulses have been manifested in communism, socialism and anarchism — all of which challenged capitalism, and all of which attracted Jews.

1. Quoted in J. P. Stern, *Hitler: The Führer and the People* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 206.

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Any specific treatment of the relationship of Jews to radicalism can plausibly begin with Karl Marx, whose version of socialism was to define it in every inhabited continent for over a century. No other individual — apart from the founders of the great religions, millenia ago — currently exerts a more decisive influence upon the planet. And it is one of the many ironies that color this topic that the Jewish people has often been accused of begetting him, even though Marx was baptized a Lutheran and matured without the benefit of any Judaic learning. He was, nevertheless, the descendant — on both his father's and mother's sides of the family — of many generations of rabbis, including the famed Meir Katzenellenbogen of sixteenth century Padua. Heinrich Marx was baptized shortly before his son's birth in 1818, and six years later Karl formally became a Christian.

In later years he felt free to indulge in bigotry, often compounding it, as in his description of Ferdinand Lassalle, the founder of German Social Democracy and his rival, as a "Jewish nigger." But Marx also attempted, on one occasion, to render his anti-Semitic views in abstract form. In a tract entitled *Zur Judenfrage*, he defined the Jews solely as an economic entity whose "worldly cult" consisted of "bargaining" and whose "worldly god" was "money." Writing in 1844, Marx condemned the Jews for assuming (under duress) the exclusive status of capitalists, and he urged their disappearance in the wake of proletarian revolution.² (In the first nation to undergo a successful proletarian revolution and to profess to be guided by Marx's doctrines, the Soviet Union, the most prized consumer item was invented and it is still sold by Jewish capitalists: blue jeans made by the Levi Straus family of California.) Pertinent to any account of the travail of Jewish radicalism has been Marx's vision of a world without Jews, for his patrimony was a dream of universal human solidarity, undivided by class or race or religion or ethnicity or nationality. By precept and example he encouraged the sense that the Jews should renounce not only their commercialism but their particularism — and could go first toward such a utopia. This was the invitation that was to lure the generations of Jews who were to succeed Marx in honoring the socialist impulse.

Such Jews seemed to be everywhere — from the revisionist Eduard Bernstein in Germany to the Prime Minister Léon Blum in France, from Daniel Cohn-Bendit of the 1968 French student rebellion to the Communist Charles Fiterman in the cabinet of François Mitterand, from the revolutionist Bela Kun in Hungary to some dominant figures of Russian Bolshevism like Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Radek as well as their Menshevik adversaries like Martov and Dan. Chaim Weizmann's brother, Shemuël, was a socialist, as was Albert Einstein; and Gershom Scholem's brother Werner represented the Communists in the Reichstag. Until the

2. David McLellan, *Marx Before Marxism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 26-31, 132-142.

immigration restrictions of the 1920s, many of the Jews fleeing to the United States appeared willing to endorse the blank check for revolution which Marx had earlier signed.

But the first Marxian firebrand in the United States was Daniel De Leon, whose origins Samuel Gompers once ascribed to “a Venezuelan family of Spanish and Dutch Jewish descent with a strain of colored blood. That makes him a first-class son of a bitch.” Gompers, himself an immigrant Jew from London, got some of De Leon’s background wrong, including the canine ancestry, probably because De Leon’s Socialist Labor Party kept trying to undermine the American Federation of Labor. But it is plausible, as his most recent biographer has argued, that De Leon renounced his own Jewish identity for the sake of shaping a future that would belong to the oppressed of all races and nationalities. Having been raised in the Sefardic community of Curaçao, he wanted the Jew to be submerged into a larger American type and was an advocate of amalgamation. De Leon propelled himself so ferociously from his own distinctive origins that he urged his co-religionists to celebrate the American holiday of Christmas.³

But most radical Jews opted not for the Socialist Labor Party, whose fortunes were virtually identical with De Leon’s own career, but for the Socialist Party of America, formed in 1901. Its most frequent candidates for President were authentic sons of the Middle Border, like Eugene V. Debs, a former member of the Indiana state legislature, and Norman Thomas, who had been Warren Harding’s paper boy in Marion, Ohio. But the party’s financial support came largely from such trade unions as the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the Furriers and Millinery Workers. By the First World War, the most widely circulated Socialist daily newspaper in the country was in Yiddish — the *Jewish Daily Forward*. Its editor, Abraham Cahan, had been so convinced that socialism was the natural political faith of the immigrant that, in his novel about a lonely capitalist, *The Rise of David Levinsky*, the protagonist avows only incidental adherence to free enterprise: “Had I chanced to hear a socialist speech, I might have become an ardent follower of Karl Marx.”⁴ That is precisely what Jurgis Rudkus, the Lithuanian immigrant employee of the Chicago abbatoirs, does in Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* and the propagandist who converts the protagonist into a socialist is a Polish Jew. The party’s leading theoretician, Morris Hillquit, had in fact been born in Latvia, where his first language had been German, his second Russian. Only after he picked up English in New York did he proceed to learn Yiddish so that he could

3. L. Glen Seretan, *Daniel De Leon: The Odyssey of an American Marxist* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 3-4, 8-9, 53, 102, 216-217.

4. Abraham Cahan, *The Rise of David Levinsky* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1917), p. 282.

inspire the Eastern European masses of the East Side. A reliable campaigner, an attorney who specialized in unpopular causes and clients, and a fluent pamphleteer, Hillquit was the triple threat of American socialism. Nevertheless, Kate Richards O'Hare, *la pasionaria* of the Corn Belt, charged that he "never knew that the Hudson River was not the West boundary of the United States."⁵ The charge was unfair, if only because Victor Berger, a part-Jewish immigrant from Austria, represented a Milwaukee district in the U.S. Congress. The only other member of the Socialist Party to be elected to the House of Representatives was Meyer London of the old East Side.

But probably the most impressive Jewish radical of that era was not a Socialist; she was an anarchist. Emma Goldman was a kinetic orator and polemicist, a labor organizer, a believer in both the necessity of individual freedom and the nobility of collective action, a scathing foe of capitalism and militarism, a champion of birth control and other women's rights, and a popularizer of avant-garde European culture. American parents, therefore, tried sometimes to frighten their children by warning them that, unless they behaved, Emma Goldman would get them. Instead, the Federal government got her, along with her anarchist comrade, Alexander Berkman. Primarily at the instigation of the head of the General Intelligence Division, J. Edgar Hoover, who was then only twenty-four, Goldman was deported to the Russia from which she had fled thirty-three years earlier. She lacked any specific feelings of solidarity with the Jewish people, but it was a tribute to the integrity of her beliefs that she became as hostile to Bolshevism in Russia as she had been to Czarism.

But in the 1920s at least, Soviet Russia commanded the sympathy and support of many Jewish radicals. In that period the Communist Party published nine daily newspapers, of which the one with the largest circulation, the *Freiheit*, was in Yiddish, outselling even the English-language *Daily Worker*.⁶ After the defeat of the Russian reactionaries and their White Armies, after the nightmare of the pogroms in the Ukraine, Communism seemed to offer the assurance that Jews would suffer no social discrimination in a movement that appealed to their humanitarianism, to their tendency to favor rationality, to their habit of disputing over the interpretation of revered texts, and to their personal ambitions as well. The American Communist party probably had no more than a 15% Jewish membership in the 1920s, but the proportion in its leadership was much higher. And even after that first generation — Benjamin Gitlow, Jay Lovestone, William Weinstone, Bertram Wolfe, Max Shachtman — could no longer worship a god that failed, Jews continued

5. Quoted in Bernard K. Johnpoll, with Lillian Johnpoll, *The Impossible Dream: The Rise and Demise of the American Left* (Wesport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1981), p. 291.

6. Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (New York: Viking, 1960), p. 191.

to dominate the party. Almost half of the Communist leaders indicted under the Smith Act were Jews, as was the editor of the *Daily Worker* in the 1950s, John Gates. Most of Hollywood's "Unfriendly Ten" were not only Communists but Jews (although, as the director Billy Wilder quipped, "two of them were talented; the rest were just unfriendly"). Early in the 1960s, when a Maoist faction, the Progressive Labor Party, split from the Communist Party, most of its leaders were of Jewish birth, as was Gus Hall, the general secretary of the beleaguered remnant.

By then, however, radicalism in the United States was widely presumed to have been as dead as chivalry. The dream of a humane socialism had barely survived its perversion in the Soviet Union and its satellites, with their forced famines, the mass purges and mock trials, the executions, the alliance with Nazism from 1939 until 1941, and the devastation of human life and spirit in the Arctic wastes of the Gulag Archipelago. When, in 1956, Nikita Khrushchev revealed to the 20th Party Congress that Stalin had been something of a tyrant, even the slow learners in the American subsidiary of the movement got the message; and Khrushchev's own brutal suppression of the Hungarian workers' revolution later that year dashed remaining hopes. Moreover, American capitalism had survived the awful crisis of the Great Depression and, after the Second World War, Marxist predictions of economic collapse were falsified by an era of unprecedented, astonishing prosperity. The political repression labelled McCarthyism, though it extended wider than the writ of the junior Senator from Wisconsin, finished off many of the remaining ambitions of American Communism.

Radicalism waned among Jews for special reasons, as the immigrants from Eastern Europe and their children ascended more quickly into the middle- and upper-middle-class than almost any other ethnic group. Their income matched that of the most respectable Protestants, like the Episcopalians and the Congregationalists. Only the husk of the working class world of our fathers and mothers remained, though many of its survivors were socialists still — some of them very still. The dramatic revision of capitalism which the New Deal wrought had helped fulfill old ideals and had tempered the worst excesses of the sweatshops and the buccaneer capitalism of the past. Both the *Jewish Daily Forward* and the leadership of the garment workers unions backed Roosevelt rather than Norman Thomas for President in 1936, and thereafter the bulk of Jewish voters remained firmly within the liberal wing of the Democratic party. Although Communists conventionally dismissed charges of Soviet anti-Semitism as "slander," evidence could not be ignored that the U.S.S.R., which had supported Arab rioters against Jews in Palestine in 1929 and had concluded a pact with the Third Reich a decade later, was systematically eradicating Jewish culture as well as religion within its borders, often by murdering the creators and custodians of its institutions. American public life, by contrast, was not eliminating Jews but rather anti-Semitism

itself, which, as a separate entry topic, was eventually dropped from the monitoring *American Jewish Year Book*. The sense of estrangement, born of exile, dissipated in many Jewish hearts.

But the 1960s provided a twist to the plot, a surprise ending to this parable of reconciliation with America. In the civil rights movement, the anti-poverty campaign, the demands of students, the rebirth of feminism and, above all, the opposition to military intervention in Vietnam, radicalism once again erupted, and Jews were again disproportionately represented and conspicuous as leaders. Most of the white Freedom Riders in the South and most of the white participants in integrationist activity in Mississippi were Jews.⁷ When the Students for a Democratic Society needed a site for the 1965 convention, one of the leaders, Richard Rothstein, rejected New York. "The midwest," he argued in a memo, "is . . . the only place where a sociologically representative (you know what that means) and geographically representative conference can take place."⁸ A university dean of admissions denying the existence of a quota on Jews could hardly have put it more circumspectly.

The following year, over half the delegates to the national S.D.S. convention were Jewish. When psychologist Kenneth Keniston interviewed a representative sample of the activists engaged in Vietnam Summer in 1967, five out of the fourteen *Young Radicals* portrayed in his book were of Jewish background, which is about ten times the Jewish percentage of the general population. The most famous of the student rebellions of the 1960s was the first — the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley in 1964. The eleven members of its steering committee included Bettina Aptheker (the daughter of Communist Party historian and editor Herbert Aptheker), Art Goldberg, Suzanne Goldberg, Michael Rossman, Stephen Weissman, and Jack Weinberg (who put into circulation the phrase "You can't trust anybody over thirty").⁹ That summer, near Meridien, Mississippi, the corpses of three civil rights workers were discovered. For the crime of having tried to persuade black citizens to register to vote, a local black named James Chaney had been so viciously beaten that the physician who performed the autopsy compared the disfigurement to a high-speed auto accident. The other two victims were Michael Schwerner of Brooklyn and Andrew Goodman of Queens.

Judaism itself played a role in the civil rights movement. Some rabbis marched in demonstrations with their Christian colleagues, and one was badly beaten. There is also the little-known case of Charles McDew, a black Ohioan who attended Orangeburg's segregated South Carolina State College. During Religious Emphasis Week, McDew asked visiting

7. Arthur Liebman, *Jews and the Left* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1979), pp. 540-541.

8. Quoted in Irwin Unger, *The Movement: A History of the American New Left, 1959-1972* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1974), p. 129.

9. Lewis S. Feuer, *The Conflict of Generations* (New York: Basic Books, 1969), pp. 423-431, 434.

Protestant ministers whether he would be allowed to worship with them, and was told no. When a rabbi invited him to his synagogue, McDew became sufficiently intrigued that he converted to Judaism. News of the first sit-in in Greensboro, North Carolina spurred him to activate a local sit-in movement, with McDew claiming inspiration from Hillel's definition of ethical action: "If I am not for myself, then who is for me? If I am for myself alone, then what am I? If not now, when?" McDew learned other Jewish expressions as well. Thrown into "the hole" of the East Baton Rouge jail, where he was tortured and lost thirteen pounds during his ordeal, he became the favorite display of right-wing groups touring the jail to stare at the "nigger Communist." When two high school girls on such a tour whispered to him, "Say something Communist," McDew replied with a vulgar anatomical allusion in Yiddish. He became the second chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.¹⁰

Professor Lewis Feuer has pointed out that, insofar as there has been continuity in the American student movement in the twentieth century, Jews are responsible for it. Because of the high proportion of Jewish students attending Columbia University in the 1960s, it is not surprising that the activists of 1968, such as Mark Rudd, were primarily Jews. It is more interesting to observe that the elders over thirty whom the New Left least distrusted were writers like Paul Goodman, an anarchist who was a product both of Hebrew school in his childhood and of City College in his youth; Herbert Marcuse, an alumnus of the Frankfurt School who was teaching at Brandeis University; and Noam Chomsky, the M.I.T. linguist whose academic sub-specialty was Hebrew grammar and who had been in the left Zionist youth movement. The journalist whom the New Left most widely admired was Isidore Feinstein, himself a college dropout. Under the *nom de plume* of I. F. Stone, he blended the pamphleteering of outrage and excoriation with readings of official documents that were as close and tight as handcuffs. The "think tank" of the New Left was the Institute for Policy Studies, whose key figures included Gar Alperovitz, Richard Barnett, Marcus Raskin and Arthur Waskow. Even the foreign film that won perhaps the biggest following among the Sixties radicals, *The Battle of Algiers*, had been done by a Jew, Gillo Pontecorvo, whose brother, the Italian nuclear physicist Bruno Pontecorvo, had defected to the Soviet Union at the zenith of the Cold War.

The most enduring of the protest movements to flourish in the 1960s, however, was the women's drive for equality. Its main thrust, epitomized by Betty Goldstein Friedan herself, has been liberal. But several of the most radical feminists, such as Susan Brownmiller, Shulamith Firestone and Naomi Weisstein, have also been of Jewish birth. Far less resilient has been the Youth International Party, or Yippies, created by Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, with an assist from the editor of *The Realist*,

10. Howard Zinn, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists* (Boston: Beacon, 1965), pp. 18, 173-174.

Paul Krassner. Such lists could be extended. But an appropriate conclusion was drawn by President Nixon. However dimly aware of the Constitutional limitations on executive power, Nixon was a good sociologist in advising his daughter Tricia not to attend a museum opening: "The arts — they're Jews, they're left-wingers — in other words, stay away." And on the White House tape released in September, 1981, the President and H. R. Haldeman have just learned of the indictments of eight radicals accused of crossing state lines to riot at the 1968 Democratic National convention in Chicago. Nixon wonders aloud whether all the indicted conspirators are Jews, or whether (as he later correctly surmises) only about half are.¹¹

And yet a demurrer must be registered. Among the few Americans who have been radicals, a disproportionate number have been Jews — and yet few Jews have been radicals. Ever since Moses Mendelssohn crossed over into Berlin and inaugurated the Jewish entry into the civil order of the West, some of his co-religionists have been conservative, many have been apolitical, most have been liberal. And, therefore, to analyze the association of American Jewry with radicalism is to study a phenomenon that is pertinent to the heritage of dissent but which is marginal to American Jewish life.

Nevertheless, few Jews have been violinists, or theoretical physicists, or comedians, or psychoanalysts — and yet no one curious about the destiny of this ancient people would maintain that their contributions are irrelevant to the development and to the social significance of such occupations. Neither the historian nor the social scientist is obliged to scrutinize majorities; and so long as it is recalled how few Jews have ever been involved in radical protest, the theories that have been formulated to account for such commitment deserve consideration.

One theory, which has been devised to explain liberalism among American Jews, has been stretched to include radical proclivities as well. Perhaps most fully developed in Lawrence Fuchs' *The Political Behavior of American Jews*, the emphasis is upon the religious imperatives of *tikkun olam* ("repair of the world") and upon the prophetic insistence on social justice. Fuchs and others have speculated that the Judaic tradition has stimulated the concern for justice in this world rather than for mercy in the world to come, has validated the life of the mind as well as moderate pleasures of the flesh. A love of learning may have released spiritual yearnings and idealistic expectations that have directed some Jews to radicalism. Moreover, an immunity to asceticism may have enhanced the demand to accelerate earthly happiness, which is threatened by economic misery and political oppression.¹²

11. Staff of The Washington Post, *The Fall of a President* (New York: Delacorte, 1974), p. 222; "Another Day in the Oval Office," *New York Times*, September 27, 1981, p. 2E.

12. Lawrence H. Fuchs, *The Political Behavior of American Jews* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956), pp. 173-191.

Such a thesis is not without its flaws. Those who are most pious and best-informed about normative Judaism are rarely radical at all, and are often not even liberal. Jews who are the most radical are often the most ignorant of their religion, including the concept of *tikkun olam*. They could, indeed, have recited all that they know about sacred doctrine while standing on one foot. But since the transmission of values is often elusive and difficult to specify and corroborate, this theory cannot be entirely dismissed. Generations of emancipation, assimilation and acculturation have not yet extinguished a distinctive and often cohesive sense of peoplehood, and the centrality of religious ideas to that definition of Jewish culture cannot be evaded. Louis D. Brandeis, for example, grew up in a home without religious instruction and he did not attend any synagogue. Nevertheless, when a White House visitor once remarked to Woodrow Wilson what a pity it was that a man as great as Brandeis should be a Jew, the President replied that Brandeis would not have been so great a man were he *not* a Jew. The heritage of the Jewish people can sometimes work in mysterious yet recognizable ways; and if the Brandeis brief was a liberal response to exploitation and the *Bintel Brief* was a social response to cultural tension and uncertainty, then radicalism ought to be located on the same continuum of “justice hunger” (Meyer Liben’s phrase).

The Judaic tradition is also tenacious enough to withstand tendentious readings as well as sentimentality and idealization. In their “death house” letters, for instance, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg invoked such antecedents for their own politics. “At Hebrew school,” Julius Rosenberg wrote, “I absorbed quite naturally the culture of my people, their struggle for freedom from slavery in Egypt.” Chanukah meant “the victory of our forefathers in a struggle for freedom from oppression and tyranny. [It] is a firm part of our heritage and buttresses our will to win our own freedom.”¹³ Such efforts to update one important feature of the Jewish past were repeated in the *Haggadah* of the “Freedom Seder” which Arthur Waskow, the son of an immigrant socialist tailor, published in 1969. His people, the *Haggadah* reads in part,

must stop collaborating. Jewish businessmen must stop buying grapes from farmers who exploit their hired laborers; Jewish organizations must not lend money to banks that oppress Black people; Jewish political leaders must not serve the military-industrial complex.

Such assertions vastly simplify politics as well as religion, but so persistently and pervasively have Jews historically sympathized with the disadvantaged that Clarence Darrow advised other defense attorneys to keep Jews as jurors.¹⁴

13. Quoted in Robert Warshow, *The Immediate Experience* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1964), pp. 40-41.

14. Arthur Waskow, *The Freedom Seder*, quoted in Stephen D. Isaacs, *Jews and American Politics* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974), pp. 93-94; Clarence Darrow, “Attorney for the Defense,” *Esquire*, 80 (October 1973): 227.

The bookishness of much of the modern radical sensibility may also be connected to an equivalent intellectual seriousness in Judaism. Ever since Marx set the example by spending his days in the British Museum reading room, from its nine a.m. opening until its seven p.m. closing, revolutionary leaders have tended to be the products of libraries rather than of slums. Although an anti-intellectual strain has surfaced in radical movements, an exaltation of laborers and peasants who work with their hands, that tendency has existed in part because so many Jews have joined and led these causes. Early in the 1930s, still the only Marxist professor in an American university was Sidney Hook, a comrade in the American Workers Party; and in the 1950s the only Marxist economist teaching in a major American university was Paul Baran, a former member of Germany's Young Communist League.¹⁵ Others like them may have immersed themselves in such movements out of what they had gleaned from a religious tradition that has expected the world to accommodate the desire to end hunger and pain, suffering and indignity. These days, when a materialist or economic interpretation of history is unfashionable, social scientists reach for their word processors when they hear the word "culture." Fuchs' theory has the advantage of incorporating into the historical development of Jewish culture itself the radicalism to which many Jews have subscribed.

Another explanation that has been articulated for such dissidence has been status deprivation. Thus, anti-Semitism and the disabilities it has commonly entailed have driven Jews to try to surmount discrimination through political and social change. The political sociologist Robert Michels argued in 1915 that

the legal emancipation of the Jews has not . . . been followed by their social and moral emancipation. (He added that) everywhere in the Jewish race there continues to prevail an ancient and justified spirit of rebellion against the wrongs from which it suffers; and this sentiment, idealist in origin, animating the members of an impassioned race, becomes . . . transformed into a revolutionary impulse towards a grandly conceived improvement of the world.¹⁶

Ferdinand Lassalle, for example, wrote at the age of fifteen: "Oh, when I yield to my childish dreams, it has always been my favorite idea to see myself, sword in hand, leading the Jews to make them independent." The adult Lassalle undoubtedly substituted the proletariat for the Jews.¹⁷ But Michels' argument, like some others that have crossed the Atlantic, generally lacks visible means of support. For the intensity of bigotry cannot be historically correlated to the eagerness of Jews to seek systematic alternatives to the status quo. Those who have been most talented or ambitious or

15. Peter Clecak, *Radical Paradoxes: Dilemmas of the American Left, 1945-1970* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 73.

16. Robert Michels, *Political Parties* (New York: Free Press, 1962), pp. 247-248.

17. Lewis S. Feuer, *Ideology and the Ideologists* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 3.

wealthy did not necessarily turn left when they were turned down or turned away. Since most Jews did not yield to the radical impulse, this theory does not differentiate between liberalism and more drastic responses to exclusivity, nor does it explain why other Jews in the Diaspora turned to Zionism, for instance.

But, if broadened, the theory of status deprivation can be salvaged by confirming the dictum of Charles Péguy that what begins in *mystique* ends in *politique*. The Hebrews had been designated a kingdom of priests, a holy people. They had created one of the world's most ancient civilizations. Nor had their low demographic profile prevented them from engendering Christianity and Islam — the two most successful religions to advance universalist claims. They had challenged some of the most powerful empires of the ancient world — Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Rome. And, yet, their descendants were pressing pants, driving milk wagons, peddling trinkets. They were deprived of sovereignty in a land of their own, deprived of the right of collective self-defense against their enemies, deprived of common laws, deprived even of a common vernacular. The wealthy few were accused of subverting the established social order, of being parasites rather than producers. The impoverished masses were suspected of hoarding wealth, gained through guile and deceit. Such conditions and such accusations, burdened with an additional charge of genocide that was levelled against an entire people, could be appreciated only by those with a taste for the absurd. The discrepancy between an exalted religious and historical status and a low civic and economic estate, and between their own ethical sensitivities and the cruelty which their neighbors often exhibited, might elicit not only a sense of resigned irony. Such anomalies might also heighten recognition of the injustices that have scarred the human enterprise, might also trigger the need to remedy gross unfairness through pursuit of revolution. Estranged from many of the customs and pieties of Western society, the Jews could call into question its claims of reason and honor.

Thus broadened, the thesis of status deprivation helps to explain the theoretical and practical leadership that Jews often provided to the radical movements that they joined. So grandiose a destiny as a Chosen People, so central a role in the moral universe — it may be speculated — might have had the effect of instilling the pride and sanctioning the ambition that leadership requires. The damaged self-esteem which, according to some psychologists and sociologists, impairs the success of certain American minorities and of women seems not have hampered the Jews, whom Charles de Gaulle, after the Six-Day War, called “*un peuple d'élite, sûr de lui-même et dominateur*” (an elite people, sure of itself and dominating). Immigrants familiar with the Bible could be heartened by the story of Joseph, whose industriousness, superior talents and adaptability enabled him to overcome hardship in Egypt and to become the first of the great Jewish interpreters of dreams. Especially in America, limits upon

the ambitions of Jewish immigrants could never be imposed, or even defined. The young academic Henry Kissinger, for example, so impressed the philosopher William Barrett that he predicted that Kissinger would one day rise to become a dean.¹⁸

Confidence of success does not, of course, account for a flair for spearheading leftist movements. But, then, neither does poverty or hardship explain the allure of socialism. For all the horrors of the sweatshops, the pitifully low wages, the dangers manifested in such tragedies as the Triangle Shirtwaist fire, the relentless and tedious routine, the seasonal precariousness of the jobs themselves, other American workers had it even worse. And, yet, the sharecroppers, the migrant workers, the cotton pickers, the miners were even less likely than garment workers to conclude that socialism was the solution to their plight. It was customary for Negroes to aver that it was tough enough being black without also being Red. During the administration of Andrew Jackson, thousands of Cherokees were driven along a "trail of tears" into exile in the West. Yet, despite their bitter ordeal and the deaths that ensued, the Cherokees' political profile has not resembled that of the Jews. Other areas of the country were as wracked by poverty as the metropolitan centers where the Jews congregated and, occasionally, as in the Southwest, socialism promised to be a remedy. But, generally, neither the party nor the ideology inspired any allegiance in the United States, for reasons that make their appeal to some Jews all the more intriguing.

Even Adam and Eve had been dissatisfied with Paradise, or at least with an aspect of its ecological policy and America was certainly east of Eden and less than ideal. Nevertheless, to analyze such a society and then to transform it politically became one of the toughest assignments in the dialectical history of class struggles. Let me take a few practice shots at an explanation. Low as living standards were a century ago, they were higher than Europe's. To the dismay of Daniel De Leon, bread-and-butter trade unionism often seemed to work and to provide benefits, which is why Gompers abandoned the socialism of his European youth. Ever since the Jacksonian era, most white adult males had been granted the suffrage, so that political reform within the system was imaginable. The tradition of the two-party system was also tenacious enough to retard the formation of effective third parties, partly because of the larcenous behavior of the Democrats and Republicans toward the clever ideas of their rivals, who were quadrennially left hanging there, twisting slowly in the wind.

Other reasons for the failure of socialism go beyond institutional arrangements. The nation was honeycombed with racial, ethnic, sectional and religious antagonisms; but there was strikingly little class consciousness. When Lenin read a newspaper account of a labor dispute in London, during which the Bobbies played soccer with the strikers, he fumed that

18. William Barrett, *The Truants* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982), p. 190.

no revolution in England was foreseeable. Yet class consciousness in Britain was even better developed than in the United States, where ethnic identity has often overpowered the sense of membership in the proletariat and the feeling of solidarity with the dispossessed. The force of ethnicity can be measured even in those documents that ostensibly report poverty and economic injustice. In Jacob Riis' *How the Other Half Lives*, the cultural diversity of the New York slums is more piquant than the deprivation that the immigrants and their children share. In Sinclair's, *The Jungle*, the pathos of immigrant adaptation is more credibly conveyed than is any metamorphosis toward socialism. In the early plays of Clifford Odets, the wounds that his working class Jews inflict upon one another seem to cut deeper than any hurt that the capitalist economy has caused them. Even in a movie like Martin Ritt's *Norma Rae*, the friendship between the New York labor organizer and the Southern woman who is his Galatea transcends the strike fund support film that the director may well have intended.

Nor could the socialist ideology, with its faith in working class solidarity, get far upstream against the national stress upon individual mobility and achievement. The radical offer to escort everyone to utopia together had to compete with the highly personal optimism and individual ambitions which American life contrived to foster. Contrasted with the demanding task of transforming an entire political economy, it appeared easy to transform one's self, to be whatever one wanted to be, to be unencumbered by the boundaries of ancestry and birth, to pick out that green light at the end of the dock which so many Americans were anxiously seeking. It appeared more plausible to rise *from* one's class rather than *with* it and, therefore, even the underprivileged took the Socialist platform — to apply Max Beerbohm's phrase — “with a stalactite of salt.”

In understanding the Jewish radical as a serial character in modern American history, a final possibility has to be explored. It may be the most intriguing theory of all, because it ricochets so sharply within the framework of the Jewish condition itself. It addresses the mystery of how the world of our fathers and mothers can be perpetuated, for it is the problem of *toledot*, of generations. The fear that there will be terminal Jews, that the present or the next generation will be the last, has been a persistent cause for alarm in Jewish history. Simon Rawidowicz's famous essay on “The Ever-Dying People” is ironic testimony to this fear, which was intensified for the immigrants who came to a reputedly God-less land. In the original film version of *The Jazz Singer* (1927), still the most compelling treatment of a Jewish milieu that Hollywood ever rendered, the five generations of cantors that distinguish the Rabinowitz family will not be extended, as Jack Robin pursues a career on Broadway. A classic of the Yiddish theatre repertoire was Jacob Gordin's *The Jewish King Lear*, which provided Jacob Adler with one of his most celebrated roles. So effective was the actor in

conveying a father's torment that, according to his own daughter's recollections, a member of the audience once rose from his seat, raced down the aisle and yelled:

To hell with your stingy daughter, Yankl! She has a stone, not a heart. . . . Come, Yankl, may she choke, that rotten daughter of yours.¹⁹

The danger that parental values will not be firmly transmitted haunts Sholom Aleichem's Tevye as well, and is replicated in *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Whether the family constellation sheds any light on the connection between American Jewry and radicalism remains open to dispute. Some writers, like the psychologist Kenneth Keniston and the journalist Midge Decter, have noticed the continuity between the liberal values of the parents and the radical commitments of their children. The sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset has concurred, stressing that the liberal politics of Jews, whose income lifts them into the upper strata, have produced "a schizophrenic existence."²⁰ Others, such as Professor Feuer, have traced "the conflict of generations," the break that signifies a political expression of Oedipal opposition. The evidence is mixed. The recent arrest of Weatherwoman Kathy Boudin has underscored the support given her by her mother and father, a prominent civil liberties attorney who has represented Communist clients. E. L. Doctorow's novel, *The Book of Daniel*, deftly portrays two generations of radicals, from the Stalinism of the Isaacsons to the New Left ideology of Daniel who, with his apolitical sister Susan, is raised by the Lewins, liberals who live in tony Brookline, Massachusetts and are devoted to civil liberties. The authority of the novel is hardly diminished by the fact that Michael and Robert Meerepol, the sons of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, were involved in the New Left themselves. Other radicals, however, seem not to have absorbed their political values at the dinner table. Trotsky's father was a landowner without sympathy for the left. Mark Rudd's father pursued a military career before selling real estate and Abbie Hoffman's was, if anything, a conservative and a Republican.

And, yet, the complexity of the Jewish tradition, in which the quest for justice has prevailed even after affluence, may be said to confirm the radicalism even of children whose fidelity to that tradition was inadvertent. That may be why the Jews managed to sustain a tolerance for dissent — if not necessarily a dedication to it — longer than anyone else. Such tolerance — and the strength of family loyalty it implied — may be why, even after growing up with little contact with poverty and discrimination,

19. Quoted in Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), pp. 470, 484.

20. Kenneth Keniston, *Young Radicals: Notes on Committed Youth* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968), pp. 14, 111-119; Nathan Glazer, "The Jewish Role in Student Activism," *Fortune*, 69 (January 1969): 113, 126; Seymour Martin Lipset, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution: Change and Persistence in Social Structures* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1970), p. 393.

Jewish youth joined the New Left in disproportionate numbers. However vaguely, they still felt a little like strangers in the land of Egypt. And their parents, whatever their reservations, usually did not repudiate their sons — or their daughters — the revolutionaries. As Marxists, the members of the Frankfurt School sought to dry up the sources of their parents' — and their own — security. Yet politics did not provoke disinheritance. Only when Max Horkheimer married his father's secretary, for instance, did temporary estrangement result. As Professor Martin Jay has commented, "It was apparently much harder for his parents to get used to the idea that Horkheimer was marrying a gentile than that he was becoming a revolutionary." The break was sharper in the home of Gershom Scholem's father, who broke off relations with another son, Werner, not when he joined the German Communist party, but when he married outside the faith (to which the father, paradoxically, did not subscribe).²¹

Abbie Hoffman's recent autobiography, *Soon to be a Major Motion Picture*, is not only a surprisingly mellow record of cultural revolution, American style, composed in its Thermidorean aftermath. With great vividness, Hoffman's book also taps some of the intricacies of feeling coursing through the Jewish family. His own special knack, he writes, was "to make outrage contagious," and he did so with increasing defiance of the middle class conventions of gentility in which he was raised. Depicting his Worcester synagogue as "about as religiously stimulating as a Ramada Inn," Hoffman claims to have extracted from Jewish history a certification of rebellion against authority, plus "a cluster of stereotypes." Education at Brandeis University he credits with having introduced him to a sense of himself and to an appropriate stance against the world, and Marcuse was one of his favorite teachers. The autobiographer insists that the past was never repudiated as he himself moved Yippiedom. Nor did Hoffman *père* reject him, despite a comment to an interviewer about what "a bright student" Abbie was:

He could have been somebody, a doctor or a professor — now we have to read the papers to see which jail he's in. (Yet his father) never [to use a genteel expression] disowned me.²²

With its emphatic Jewishness, *Soon to be a Major Motion Picture* also makes apparent how weakly political fashions can withstand certain feelings associated with home and family. When his political activities had been most publicized, Hoffman had defined himself primarily as a kid, championing the youth culture against capitalist co-optation and political repression, and seeking to define what he termed Woodstock Nation.

21. Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School, 1923-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), p. 35; Gershom Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem: Memories of My Youth* (New York: Schocken, 1980), pp. 30-31.

22. Abbie Hoffman, *Soon to be a Major Motion Picture* (New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1980), pp. 3, 13, 15, 24, 26-27, 48.

Placed on the witness stand during the Chicago conspiracy trial, he was asked to identify himself; and the exchange went as follows:

A. My name is Abbie. I am an orphan of America. . . .

Q. Where do you reside?

A. I live in Woodstock Nation.

Q. Will you tell the Court and the jury where it is.

A. Yes. It is a nation of alienated young people. We carry it around with us as a state of mind in the same way the Sioux Indians carried the Sioux nation around with them. It is a nation dedicated to cooperation versus competition. . . .

Q. Can you tell the Court your present age?

A. My age is 33. I am a child of the 60s.

Q. When were you born?

A. Psychologically, 1960.

Later asked his occupation, Hoffman replied that he was “a cultural revolutionary. Well, I am really a defendant . . . full time.”²³ Here, it might be noted, is a curious parallel with Alexander Ginzburg, Soviet dissident, whose nationality a judge once asked him to specify (the famous “fifth point” on a Soviet internal passport). Ginzburg replied: “Prisoner.” Yet, in order to defy Soviet anti-Semitism and to associate himself with the Jewish tradition of resistance to tyranny, Ginzburg substituted his mother’s for his father’s name.²⁴

By 1981 Hoffman had forsaken the cult of youthfulness that really had little to do with radicalism and which was closer to Ponce de Leon than to Daniel De Leon. It may be possible to live a few decades as a kid, but it makes little sense to die as one. Hoffman therefore acknowledges, rather poignantly, that he “came into this world acutely aware of being Jewish and [I] am sure I’ll go out that way.”²⁵

That seems to be the lesson that others have learned as well. For all the difficulties that Jews have felt in attempting to define and perpetuate a distinctive culture, it has outlasted all the political surrogates that some radicals have struggled to find for it. Morris Raphael Cohen, who taught philosophy to many young socialists at City College, once remarked that “no change of ideology — no matter how radical — can make a man cease to be the son of his parents.” That is why some have come to realize that they were Jews before they were Socialists, and may still be affected by that fact long after the enthusiasms of their youthful days are past. When Philip Rahv, the longtime editor of *Partisan Review* and virtually the prototype of the deracinated Jewish radical intellectual, died in 1973, a large part of his estate was left to the state of Israel — where he sometimes wished he had settled.²⁶ Even Howard Fast, once the representative

23. Mark L. Levin *et al.*, eds., *The Tales of Hoffman* (New York: Bantam, 1970), pp. 140-141.

24. Joshua Rubenstein, *Soviet Dissidents: Their Struggle for Human Rights* (Boston: Beacon, 1980), pp. 17, 244.

25. Hoffman, *Soon to be a Major Motion Picture*, p. 13.

26. Morris Raphael Cohen, *Reflections of a Wondering Jew* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1950), p. 4; Alan Lelchuk, “Philip Rahv: The Last Years,” in Arthur Edelstein, ed., *Images and Ideas in American Culture* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1979), pp. 218-219.

middle-brow novelist of the Communist Party, once blacklisted and jailed (and now perhaps better known as the father-in-law of Erica Jong), is writing multi-volume sagas of several generations of an American Jewish family. At one time, writers took pride in being radicals, citing the Latin etymological origin *radix*, meaning “root,” and they liked to announce that they intended to go to the root of things. Now, while roots still matter, the meaning has altered, and writers allude to their ethnic consciousness, defining who they are according to what and where their ancestors have been.

The change suggests a certain abiding quality — as well as the recognition that the radical experience is often a story of disenchantment, of emancipation from false hopes and false messiahs, from simplicities and certitudes. Much remains to be learned not only *about* radicalism but also *from* the entire theory and practice of democratic dissent, and few would wish the yearning for justice to be smothered in a cloak of complacency and selfishness. So long as the political process is subject to the pluralistic demands of interest groups, and so long as the skies over Washington are black with the Lear Jets of lobbyists defending business interests, those without voices need to be spoken for and those without power need to be championed.

But many radicals who sought to transpose essentially religious feelings into worldly engagement were unaware of inserting into politics the most corrupting elements of faith as well — dogma and superstition. Some radicals were slow to realize that even idealism, for all its attractiveness, is a quality that ought to be judged not merely by its intensity, but by its consequences, by its scope, and by its compatibility with the sense of proportion and discrimination. Citizens whose formative years were spent in the grip of socialism should be credited with realizing the pertinence of politics in altering reality, often for the benefit of those who care nothing for civic issues. But many problems defy political remedy, for we bear wounds too deep for time itself to heal and which have proven to be the fate of our species. The maturation that some Jews found in and beyond radicalism therefore dictates a conclusion which was expressed most economically by William Blake, who asked: “What is the price of experience? Do men buy it for a song, or wisdom for a dance in the street? No, it is bought with the price of all that a man hath.”

The Ugly Jew and the Cry for Normalcy: Jewish Self Criticism at the Turn of the Century

LOTHAR KAHN

JEWISH REFERENCE BOOKS TELL US THAT political Zionism owes its existence to Herzl's re-examination of the Jewish question in the light of the widely prevalent anti-Semitism at the time of the Dreyfus Case. What they fail to state and what even Herzl's biographers have failed to make clear is that Herzl was not the only literary figure engaged in a reassessment of the Jewish condition at the fin-de-siècle. Especially in Germany, writers had become painfully aware of a particularly unhealthy attitude among young Jews toward themselves as individuals, toward the Jewish group, its values and its preoccupations, and that many had inadvertently skidded into accepting the anti-Semites' stereotype of the Jew. While the twenty odd years between 1894 and 1914 certainly had no monopoly on Jewish self-hate, they did produce some notable examples: Otto Weininger, Arthur Trebitsch, Walter Calé. Two of these ended their lives in suicide; Trebitsch was repeatedly a guest in institutions for the insane. Their troubled relationship to themselves as Jews and to Jews in general played a vital role in these horror tales of self-rejection.

As part of this intense self-examination by young writers, Herzl and Nordau included, they created characters who, in their attitude toward Jewishness, bordered on the grotesque. Their heroes were obsessed with an unwanted Jewishness, haunted by the idea that they might fit the Jewish "type", willing to pay any moral price to escape from their Jewish selves. Of course, they became caricatures in the process, rather than flesh and blood characters. Unfortunately, as with the likes of Philip Roth and Aharon Appelfeld in our time — writers who have depicted negative features in Jews or created self-hating Jews — critics even then tended to see these novels and dramas as autobiographical. While they may, indeed, contain some autobiographical features and certainly deal with approximate events experienced by their authors, there is no evidence at all that these ugly, self-hating Jews were replicas of the authors themselves.

What is true about these writers is that they were genuinely worried about the deleterious effect of anti-Semitism on personality, of a low Jew-

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ish self-image on personality, of the desire to escape on personality. They were also troubled by the anxiety that these young, ambivalent, or self-deprecating Jews caused their fathers, still firmly rooted in their Jewishness, and by the impact, generally, that such people had on the Jewish family. In the process of the self-criticism in the novels and dramas, the writers did find facets of the Jewish condition deplorable and even reprehensible. They did perceive an unmistakable materialism, or philistinism, as they called it more often. They also deplored cultural pretentiousness, social climbing that viewed intermarriage with the Christian aristocracy (or upper bourgeoisie) as the *summum bonum*. But there is no indication that the authors approved; on the contrary, by writing these social exposes, these psychological studies — their literary talent was insignificant — they were stressing the need for change, reform, a new synthesis and, above all, a healthier Jewish psyche. While none of these writers dwelled on positive values in the Jewish tradition and were not in any sense strongly positive Jews, they did see themselves as Jews. Perhaps this fact was not for them a banner to carry proudly, but neither was it a badge of shame, a fact to be concealed, to be wished away, or to be ignored as part of one's identity. While they were, for the most part, assimilationists and looked upon themselves as Germans of the Mosaic persuasion, they were beginning to feel uncomfortable with this formula. They did not carry their doubts about assimilationism to the Zionist conclusion, as did Herzl and Nordau, but, their work did indicate that they thought something was rotten in the state of Denmark and needed mending. While it was not a conscious goal for them, their works show that something like Zionism was in the air or, at least, there was a need for major change in Jewish attitudes.

Clearly one of the most extreme pathologies about Jewishness found anywhere in a novel is Leo Wolff, the hero of *Werther der Jude* by Ludwig Jacobowski (1860–1900). The author, the most gifted of this group of writers, died very young after a promising career as a poet and novelist. He was employed by a Jewish defense agency and engaged in polemics with anti-Semitic intellectuals of his time. The charge that Leo Wolff was a thinly disguised Jacobowski is absurd, although the author surely drew upon his own experiences in the development of the novel. This horror of a Leo Wolff is a composite of Jewish traits that Jacobowski had perceived in his contemporaries. Some of these traits, Jacobowski maintained, were responsible for the continuing existence of anti-Semitism, even as he recognized them, at the same time, as a *result* of anti-Semitism.

The agonies of Leo Wolff encompass virtually every negative attitude toward himself that an insecure, assimilated Jew has ever experienced. A student in Berlin, he has impregnated a sweet Gentile girl whom he loves, associates with fraternity brothers some of whom are vicious Jew-haters, and lives in fear that his banker-father will disgrace him through his business dealings. The father does, indeed, ruin the parents of Leo's friends

and the son rushes home to make amends. His accumulated neuroses lead to a breakdown, and he is unaware that, in his absence, his sweetheart has killed herself. Overwhelmed by it all, he shoots himself.

Leo Wolff judges Jews by a different standard than he does the Goyim. He is obsessed by the fear that Jews cheat in business, that *Börsenjuden* make themselves ludicrous in public, behave improperly in love, speak German with a Yiddish word order or inflection. He perceives Jewish weaknesses where there are none, apologizes for Jewish moral and social inadequacies, and demands of them a code of conduct that would relieve him of his fears. Hatred, anger, and anxiety fuse into one whenever a Jew is involved in a questionable affair. In any negative story in the press on any situation, he searches for the Jewish name. On Christian holidays he feels ill at ease. He is attracted to Gentiles, though Christian religious elements repel him as much as Jewish teachings. To a woman of his town he explains:

We young modern Jews have gotten away from any rosy conception of life . . . we know how very justified Jew-hatred is. We are, after some decades, the first generation to have grown up again in a climate of hatred. No one knows how much a Jewish youngster suffers daily from discrimination, contempt and name calling. . . . From the moment a Jewish child ventures out into the street for the first time, the first link is also forged in his chain of suffering.

Leo is disturbed by the fact that the older generation, still strong, forceful, business-like, does not suffer from Jew-contempt as does he who is young, modern, assimilated. Yet the old have sown the wind and the young are reaping the whirlwind. The older Jews should recognize their unquestionable guilt in fostering the omnipresent Jew-hate.

Not unlike Jacobowski, Leo expects the end of anti-Semitism to come only with the moral regeneration of Jews. He dismisses the remarks of reasonable Gentiles who stress the irrational nature of anti-Semitism which, they think, exists independent of any action by Jews. Leo accepts the judgment of anti-Semites as facts. Yet when the most overt Jew-baiter in his circle denounces another young man as a "Jew-boy," Leo challenges him to a duel — but mostly to escape the charge of Jewish cowardice.

Though *Werther der Jude* is structurally flawed and its reception at the time was hurt by the debate over the autobiographical question — (Dubnow thought it was) — it must be viewed as one of the most instructive Jewish novels of the 19th century. The Werther part of the title stems from the young Jacobowski's original intention to write an epistolary novel in the style of Goethe's *Werther*, but the author soon recognized the inadequacy of his means.

A similarly internally torn character emerges from the play, *Schmelz der Jude*, by Ferdinand Bronnen, who wrote under the pen-name Franz Adamus (1867–19??). Born in Auschwitz, this author spent the better part of his life as a school teacher. According to some, he was the father of

Arnolt Bronnen, an expressionist poet, who became a companion of Goebbels and other Nazi big-wigs, and emerged after World War II as the mayor of an East German town.

Like Leo Wolff, Schmelz belongs to an anti-Semitic, nationalist fraternity calling themselves The Nibelungs and is hopelessly ashamed of his Jewishness. He goes to any lengths to conceal it. He deplores the day when Jews were allowed to exit from the ghetto; he wishes them out of existence altogether. He blushes at the sight of a Jew, especially if he shows a Semitic trait or habit. He has changed his name and lives in dread of somehow betraying his origin. He requires repeated assurances of his Aryan looks. He has nearly convinced himself that his mother is really a Silesian peasant woman, not Jewish at all, and that his father is not his father. Toward the young men in the fraternity he is obsequious, all too proud to be one of them. When a Jewish peddler appears in their midst, he is deeply disturbed; the self-assertive Zionist, perhaps not one of the author's favorites, also arouses his ire. Schmelz is alarmed when told by the Zionist that he will alert Schmelz's father to his conversion. An uncle, who has always been generous to Schmelz, interrupts a fraternity session; the nephew pretends not to recognize him. Finally, the father himself appears and suffers a stroke when confronting his son. Even the Nibelungs find the young man's behavior reprehensible. Schmelz finally experiences remorse by the bedside of his paralyzed father.

Very similar, not only in the internally split hero, but even in its settings and plot development is a play, *Ketten* (Chains) (1908) by Hermann Reichenbach. Young Siegfried Lehmann has grown up in a strictly observant home and is drafted into the army which he initially detests. Then he reverses himself and wants to become an officer. But this calls for conversion to Christianity, which would cause deep pain to his parents and, for practical reasons, silence on his Jewish birth. All of these have, nonetheless, become fact by the time he returns home and confides his "misdeeds" to his cousin Rahel whom he has always loved. She turns away in shame and disgust.

Thus far, Siegfried has acted out of need and the desire to be an officer. But when we next encounter him, he is in a drinking establishment, in the company of fellow-officers who, among other things, jeer at Jews. When, by chance, one of his father's friends enters the establishment, Siegmund deliberately ignores him. Soon the father himself is alerted, and the son confesses to him. An officer insults Siegmund the Jew and is challenged by him to a duel. Siegmund has not properly gauged the extent of the Jew-hatred and he dies of the consequences of the duel. Even the officers are moved by the tragedy in spite of their dislike for Jews.

Siegmund's pathology is less severe than is either Wolff's or Schmelz's. He does not actually prefer to be on the enemy side. He is simply a young man who, contrary to expectations, finds the military life to

his liking. Still, *Ketten* is representative of the literature of Jewish tensions, self-analysis, and the willingness to "cross over."

There were also grossly satirical novels showing the fin-de-siècle Jewish psyche in gross disarray, written by men about whom little is known. Adolf Dessauer's *Grosstadtjuden* (Big City Jews) shows the Jews of Vienna in psychological and moral decay. Self-deprecation, self-hate, outright Jewish anti-Semitism place them in ludicrous positions. Dessauer's various families are disintegrating over their Jewish conflicts and dissensions. Intermarriage looms large, with Jews looking for Gentile partners, even if they are well-known anti-Semites. Some characters wish to cleanse themselves of their impure blood only to find themselves entrapped by their follies in a mire so deep that they cannot extricate themselves. These self-hating Jews have all accepted the anti-Semitic views of them.

The story itself revolves about the family and friends of the wealthy industrialist Jordan. His wife and one daughter have themselves baptized and the mother encourages the girl to marry a worthless aristocrat — all the better to submerge undesirable origins. The second daughter, while refusing to become a Catholic, rebels against the father by joining a revolutionary socialist group. The only son is likewise a socialist, a thorn in his father's flesh. While Jordan himself is a non-practicing Jew, in his attitudes toward family and life he tries consciously to remain faithful to Jewish tradition, and the dissolution about him is more than his health can bear.

Jordan's deputy in the business is Leopold Kastner, a caricatured version of Leo Wolff. He is busy in front of the mirror trying to eradicate Jewish characteristics. He harangues against Jews within his family, and the Gentile girl whom he marries betrays him and ruins his every waking hour. By contrast, his sister is a nationally conscious Jewess. She, too, has married a Gentile, but her fiancé has always sought out Jews, prefers their company to that of others, and abhors the self-deprecation, ambivalences, and poor emotional health that he sees everywhere among Viennese Jews. The author argues less against intermarriage as such, but against it as a means of escaping from Jewishness and in search of social status.

What Dessauer did to expose the self-hate and social climbing among Viennese Jews, Arthur Landsberger did for Berlin Jews, also around 1910. The heroine of his *Millionär* pushes her husband toward power, prestige and total corruption. Twice she persuades him to cheat her own father out of a fortune. When this father dies, she will not attend his funeral — largely out of repugnance for the Jewish village of her birth. When she converts to Christianity, her baptism is as casual an act as putting on a dress. Repeatedly, she voices satisfaction over the distance that she has created between the Jewish villager she had been and the Christian urbanite she has become.

Zionist histories have largely ignored Max Nordau's play *Dr. Kohn* (1894), which also described the inner malaise of the Jew. While the hero

has retained his sanity, other Jews have not. Leo Kohn, Ph.D., has failed to achieve a professorship because he chooses to remain a Jew. Yet he is a freethinker and not averse to intermarriage. In fact, he falls in love with Christine Moser, whose father is a baptised Jew. Old Moser had had no religious beliefs and wants to become fully integrated into German life. Toward this goal he has married into a German general's family. His brother-in-law, Quincke, is not only a prominent Protestant clergyman, but an extreme nationalist and anti-Semite. Moser has deliberately kept a low profile in the family, never mentioning his origins to his children — mainly because he wants these origins forgotten by the next generation. When Kohn asks Moser for Christine's hand, Moser will gladly accept him provided that the young man will convert. He will not. In the ensuing discussion during which Leo increasingly identifies as a Jew, the whole folly of Western assimilationism is exposed. Nordau, the psychiatrist, recognizes the modern Jew as neurotic, uncertain, ashamed, full of the unresolved conflicts of being unwanted and unlikeable. This discussion explains why Nordau became an advocate of the "muscle-Jew," the Jew of physical vigor. Moser's son, Karl, is as viciously anti-Jewish as his uncle Quincke. He will not tolerate a Jew in the family — he has totally suppressed the fact of his father's Jewishness — and challenges Leo to a duel. While Leo shoots in the air, Karl does not.

In his early writings on anti-Semitism Nordau had mistakenly presented it as a specifically German phenomenon and of recent origin. The Nordau who wrote *Dr. Kohn* knew better. Once a Jew, always a Jew, in Germany, France, wherever. There was but one remedy: instead of veiling one's Jewishness, accept it; be proud of it, nurture it!

Theodor Herzl in *Das neue Ghetto* was equally worried about the psychological state of contemporary Jewry. What concerns the father of Zionism in this play — as in *The Jewish State* and the novel, *Altneuland* — is the persistence of ghetto attitudes, unhealthy, reactive lifestyles, and the need for greater normalcy. He clamors for the right of the Jew to be as free to be a Jew as it is for the Christian to be a Christian.

What he presents in *Das neue Ghetto* is an ailing people, excessively obsessed with money, insecure despite the power that money brings, bowing and cringing inside while giving an outward show of bravado. Besides his unflattering portrait of a family of *Börsenjuden* into which his hero, Dr. Samuel, marries, the conversation between Samuel and his Christian friend carries special interest. The two have broken over this marriage. Samuel, somewhat peculiarly, thanks the Christian for showing him the first steps out of the Ghetto; he seems himself ready to walk by himself the rest of the way. He will remain with his *Börsenjuden*, good or bad, contemptible or not. It is with Jews that he belongs and it is with them that he will stay. Would his Christian friend forsake his group because, inevitably, it had undesirables in its midst? But there is little doubt that many of these Jews are undesirables and that it requires an act of determination to toler-

ate them — not to speak of reforming them or leading them toward a new life!

Samuel Lublinski, a culture critic like Nordau, chimed in with the self-criticism of Jacobowski, Dessauer, Landsberger, Adamus and others. His goal, however, was national union, perhaps Zionism, not a prideless reform of Jewish character, however obnoxious it might be to the host people. As he saw it, Jewish culture was a nomad culture, forever in conflict with the entrenched one. Nomad, for him, meant young, striving, “becoming,” i.e., incomplete and full of inner strife. While the modern Jew might long to involve himself in the affairs of his host country, he remained an outsider, disliked as a rationalist, dogmatist, a “joke.” The established culture looked upon the Jewish influence as an aggressive assault that it would rather do without. The nomadic factor was responsible for the inability to appease Christians, for the dislike of Jewish writers and artists. Like Herzl, Lublinski hoped for a regeneration of Jews through a new attitude, perhaps a change of scenery, a sense of pride — not a spineless concession to the outside world that Jews were, indeed, sick and undesirable.

Self-criticism was in the air when Zionism appeared as one solution to the deficiencies of Jewish personality and character. Whatever new problems it brought in its wake, they seemed minor in comparison with the perceived progressive deterioration in the attitudes of Jews toward themselves and others. The various heroes believed themselves ugly, evil, hateful, contemptible in the eyes of others and, eventually, they acquired these characteristics in their own eyes. Two distinct attitudes evolved from this vision: 1 — to regard themselves as undesirable and inferior and to apologize to the non-Jewish world for existing or 2 — to advocate some kind of reform from within. Jacobowski, Adamus, and others were contented with pinpointing the problems; fortunately, there were also Herzl and Nordau who recognized the same problems, and carried them forward to a solution. These novels and dramas make one thing frightfully clear: the Jewish psyche was perceived as badly deformed and some idea was needed to restore to it a degree of normalcy.

*Hasidism Through the Eyes of Three Masters**

SAMUEL H. DRESNER

THE STATE OF HASIDIC RESEARCH TODAY is both promising and problematic. It is promising because of the growing number of scholars, both in Israel and the Diaspora, who have directed their efforts to the subject of Hasidism. There are several reasons which might be suggested for this increased interest. One is spiritual, and it has to do with what Daniel Bell has called the "exhaustion of modernity," that is, the failure first of technology and then of "culture" (literature — art — music) as substitutes for religion. After several centuries in which "natural" man has explored the secular kingdom in search of redemption, there has again emerged a receptivity to the sacred dimension of reality. This accounts, in good measure, for the attentiveness to the Hasidic movement, the last great flowering of the Jewish spirit. A second reason for the growing interest in Hasidism is historical. The catastrophic end of a thousand years of Eastern European Jewish communal life has stimulated considerable activity to document and understand what was previously taken for granted and, consequently, in good measure, overlooked. Studies on Hasidism, formerly so scant, are today considered of sufficient interest to warrant their publication in major scholarly journals. Formerly, no courses in Hasidism were offered at institutions of higher learning, even Jewish institutions; today, the number rises each year, as does the number of doctoral dissertations on, or related to, Hasidism. One product of the new research is the publication of the first critical edition of a classic Hasidic book with full commentary, which provides a key that will unlock many difficulties for the student and sets an example which others will no doubt follow.¹

Hasidic research, however, is also problematic. So little has been done in the past that is of lasting value and upon which one can build. Anti-

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1. Dov Ber, Maggid of Mezritch, *Maggid Devarav le-Yaakov*, ed. and commentary by R. Shatz (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1976).

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Hasidic prejudice in the West kept many students from contributing to this field and rendered the work of others ineffective. With the absence, until very recently, of university-level courses in Hasidism, let alone of professorships, fellowships or research grants, few were encouraged into a field with so bleak a future. Of the studies which have appeared, most are characterized either by over-enthusiasm or lack of sensitivity. Hasidism has been either romanticized or maligned. Indeed, the absence of a balanced approach to the subject has been a major obstacle. New movements are bound to engender advocates and critics, and Hasidism, because of its nature and its claims, aroused a storm of controversy that has persisted down to our very days. Fervor characterized both its proponents and its enemies. Attack was followed by counterattack, forgery by counter-forgery; the burning of books, excommunications and invitations for the interference of government authorities were the order of the day. In time, matters quieted down, partly because the Hasidic movement had grown so powerful that it had to be received back into the community. Much of the more modern literature, however, has remained impassioned, extreme, and bitter. As a result, the contemporary scholar has at his disposal few even-handed and well-informed studies congruent with Hasidism's depth and breadth. The sad fact is that we possess hardly a handful of significant works. Heschel himself observed in 1952 that

in the field of Jewish scholarship there are few subjects about which so much has been written in so dilettantish a manner as the history of Hasidism. Few researchers have followed the fine example set by Eliezer Tzvi ha-Cohen Zweifel with his work, *Shalom al Yisrael* (Zhitomir, 1868–69) . . . Shmuel Abba Horodetzky's important monographs did not concern themselves sufficiently with details. Dubnow, in his noteworthy *History of Hasidism*, paid more attention to the opponents of Hasidism, the Mitnagdim, than to Hasidism itself . . .²

The lack of surviving documents is a second obstacle to a proper understanding of the movement. Referring to the post-Holocaust situation, Heschel noted in the same article that

. . . we remain unsure of thousands of simple facts: biographical dates, bibliographic details, identification of names, etc. . . . [R]esearch on Hasidism suffers from a dearth of documents.³

While Heschel was writing about the post-Holocaust condition, such a vacuum had, in fact, long prevailed in the great Jewish libraries of Western Europe and America, upon which most historical research on Judaism was dependent. The author of a work on Sabbatai Tzvi observed that it was easier to write a study on that subject than on some noted Hasidic figure, for while manuscripts about Sabbateanism were being avidly collected by the Jewish librarians of the West, Hasidic documents, even the

2. "Unknown Documents Relating to the History of Hasidism, (Yiddish)" *YIVO Bletter*, vol. 36 (1952), p. 113.

3. *Ibid.*

most valuable, though readily accessible, were virtually ignored. The librarians followed the example of their doyen, Steinschneider, the master bibliographer who insatiably ransacked every nook and cranny in search of a Hebrew manuscript, but freely admitted that he knew next to nothing about Hasidic literature. Sabbateanism, though heretical, was after all a curiosity, while Hasidism was a contemporary calamity, a "malady of Judaism."⁴

A case in point is Elkan Adler, the noted English barrister, book collector and son of the former Chief Rabbi. While his anti-Hasidism seems a somewhat gentler British version, it no doubt played a role in what he felt was of value to collect. The description that he gives in his travel book of "Hasidic" joy on Simhat Torah around the turn of the century in Jerusalem, includes seeing himself as

Gulliver among the Brobdingnagians, when the monkeys patronized him . . . If the tune of the Chassidim is funny, . . . a Chassidish howl, . . . [and] the harmonization "rather like a Chassid's nightmare after a heavy supper off Beethoven," . . . the manner in which they make the Hakafoth, or circuits of the Synagogue, during the Rejoicing of the Law, is funnier still. It was comical and shocking to see venerable gray beards pirouetting on their toes like some European fairy of the pantomime, but it was highly appreciated, and I had to simulate satisfaction for fear of being rebuked, as Michal was when she objected to king David's "dancing with all his might."⁵

An unusual combination of Jewish knowledge and aristocratic wealth, Adler literally scoured the earth in search of rare Hebrew books. "He has managed to collect manuscripts at the rate of about one hundred a year and to visit each of the continents, except Australia, half a dozen times or so"⁶ in search of them. Yet the catalogue of his manuscripts reveals hardly a single Hasidic work.

Another problem in Hasidic research is the separation, by predilection or circumstance, between some Hasidic scholarship and a familiarity with Hasidic life. In other disciplines, this disjuncture may not have serious consequences. The essence of Hasidism, however, was the living reality of which the written word, impressive and vast as it is, is only a reflection. Hasidism was more than the philosophy which could be distilled from its classics. It was a certain style of life. With the demise of Eastern European Jewry, the living tradition was severely attenuated.

[I]t is a tragedy, (Heschel writes), that this great movement is essentially an oral movement, one that cannot be preserved in written form. It is ultimately a living movement. It is not contained fully in any of its books. . . . [I]n other words, Hasidism has a very personal dimension. . . . To be a Hasid is to be in love with God and with what God has created. Once you are in love you are a different human being . . . That is the history of Hasidism.

4. See S. Baron, "Steinschneider's Contribution to Historiography," *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume*, English Section (New York, 1950), p. 95.

5. *Jews in Many Lands* (Philadelphia, 1905) pp. 50-55.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

Indeed, he who has never been in love will not understand and may consider it a madness. That is why there is so much opposition to Hasidism, more than we are willing to admit.⁷

Some modern scholars, not familiar or sympathetic with Hasidic life, may be limited almost exclusively to its literature and, by necessity, approach their subject like astronomers, biologists . . . or tourists.

Hasidic literature itself, finally, is intrinsically difficult to penetrate. It is enigmatic, terse, usually the work of a disciple transcribing the words of his master, often written in a poor Hebrew which is nothing more than a translation of the original spoken Yiddish,⁸ characterized by allusions to kabbalistic formulae, and presupposes a knowledge of rabbinic texts. The writings of Hasidism, therefore, though filled with brilliant insights and profound exposition, present a formidable obstacle to the student. One need only observe that although Hasidic literature numbers about 3,000 items, we lack a bibliography, an adequate study of its nature and extent, a comprehensive anthology, and a critical edition, of, and commentary to, even a handful of its classics texts.⁹

In a little known article,¹⁰ Heschel once suggested that the attitude toward Hasidism on the part of the scholars of the West was yet another example of their wholesale rejection of the Ashkenazic tradition in favor of the supposedly more liberal, "cultured," and decorous Sephardic mode. To demonstrate his point, he included one of his rare references to contemporary writers:

In the modern period, its [the Sephardic] influence permeated other Jewish groups, especially in Germany. It was the admiration of the 19th-century German Jewish scholars for the Sephardic Middle Ages that determined the mood of the modern "Science of Judaism" (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*).

The scholars of emancipated German Jewry saw in the Spanish period the "Golden Age" of Jewish history, and celebrated it as a happy blend of progress and traditionalism upon which they desired to model their own course. In their research they went to the point of applying the cultural standards of the "Golden Age" to the literature of later centuries. For some

7. "Hasidism," *Jewish Heritage*, (Fall/Winter, 1972): 14-16.

8. A reference to this problem is found in the introduction to *Teshuot Hen* by R. Gedaliah of Linitz, one of the earliest followers of the Besht. The editor of the book, a disciple of R. Gedaliah and a son of the author of *Shivhey ha-Besht*, explains that difficulties in comprehending the text may be due to the profundity of the ideas, the errors of the printer and the limits of his own understanding in transcribing the text. "Or perhaps the meaning of the author was altered in [my] translating from one language [Yiddish] to another [Hebrew] and it was as a 'tongue of stammerers' to me. For it is known that the task of translating from one tongue to another is considerable, in that care must be taken neither to add nor detract from the intent of the author . . ." [*Teshuot Hen* (Berditchev, 1816), end of the introduction].

9. A century ago Solomon Schechter believed that Hasidic literature consisted of some "200 volumes." The Mosad Harav Kook of Jerusalem, under the general editorship of Dr. Yitzhak Raphael and the authorship of Shalom H. Parush, is publishing a bibliography of Hasidic literature. See also the fine translation of R. Nahum of Tchernobil's *Light of the Eyes*, by A. Green, published by Paulist Press.

10. "The Two Great Traditions," *Commentary* (5, 1948): 420.

Jewish scholars, any Jewish literature dating after 1492, the year in which Jewish life in Spain ceased, was not considered worthy of scholarly investigation. Their example was followed in forming the curricula of the higher schools of Jewish learning, which gave no place to works written after 1492 and before the beginning of modern Hebrew literature.

This desire for inner identification with the Spanish Jewish period reflected itself in the synagogue architecture of the 19th century. Liberal Jewish synagogues in Central Europe were built in the Moorish style, as if the stucco arabesques, horseshoe arches, and dados of glazed and painted tiles were the aptest possible expressions of the liberal Jew's religious mood.

Hand in hand with the romantic admiration of the Sephardim that became one of the motifs of Reform Judaism in Germany went social aspirations, too. The social standing of the few Sephardim in Germany was superior to that of the Ashkenazim, and the leaders of the new Reform movement, anxious to develop a new and more advanced way of Jewish life that would abandon the traditional forms still adhered to by the Jewish masses, often blatantly imitated the manners of the Sephardim. In the Portuguese synagogues they found that solemnity and decorum which they missed in the old *shul*. It was hardly for scientific reasons that the Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew was introduced in the early "temples."

... [T]he modern Ashkenazic Jew, particularly in Central Europe, often came to lose his appreciation of the value of his own original way of life. He developed an embarrassed aversion for the dramatic, for the moving and vivid style, whether in the synagogue or in human relations. For him dignity grew to mean something to be achieved by strict adherence to an established, well-balanced, mannerly form undisturbed by any eruption of the sudden and spontaneous ... Thus Hermann Cohen wrote in 1916 that the elimination of the dramatic manner from the worship of East European Jews would turn the synagogues into "seats of true culture."

This lack of understanding for and alienation from the values of the Ashkenazic traditions became complete. Describing the way in which the Hasidim prayed, a prominent Jewish historian, in a work first published in 1913 and reprinted in 1931, could write:

"The [Hasidic] movement did not signify a gain for religious life; the asset that lay in its striving for inwardness was more than cancelled out by the preposterousness of its superstitious notions and of its unruly behavior ... According to its principles, Hasidism meant a total revolt against the divine service (sic!); ... Hasidism contributed to the deterioration rather than to the improvement of the divine service ... its noise and wild, restless movements brought new factors of disturbance ... It is no wonder that at such a time complaints were made about the lack of devoutness and attention, about the disorder and interruptions. The divine service stood in need of a thorough renovation and restoration if it was to survive. The modern age [read: the Reform movement — A.J.H.] supplied both.

The book referred to by Heschel is *Der Jüdische Gottesdienst*, the standard work on Jewish liturgy, by Ismar Elbogen,¹¹ one of the leading figures in *Die Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Other cases of this point of view have not been uncommon. For example, according to the system of organization of the standard library catalogue for Judaica, "Hasidism" is listed under the rubric, "sects," along with the Essenes, the Karaites and

11. Frankfurt, 1931, p. 392.

the Samaritans;¹² or in an edition of the Ashkenazi High Holiday Maḥzor, which includes versions of the liturgy never before published and full commentary, the editor notes that the one liturgy of Ashkenazi Jews he omitted was that of the Hasidim. As early as 1887, perhaps the most distinguished figure associated with the development of American Jewish scholarship, Solomon Schechter, had published a sympathetic article on Hasidism in English ("The Chassidim," first read before the Jews College Literary Society, November 13, 1887, later printed in *The Jewish Chronicle*, and reprinted in his *Studies in Judaism*). Virtually no one on this continent was to emulate him. In the more than seventy volumes of the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, the more than forty volumes of the *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, and the more than fifty volumes of the Hebrew Union College Annual, only a handful of articles relating to Hasidism have appeared — and these, more often, to anti-Hasidism!¹³ It would be fair to conclude that the *Wissenschaft* approach to Hasidism was perpetuated, until recently, by its American advocates.

Among the few scholars who repudiated the outlook of *Jüdische Wissenschaft* and contributed to a reawakening of interest in Hasidism have been Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem. Their motives were only partly the same.

Buber opposed the stress of *Jüdische Wissenschaft* on rationalism, philology and positivism; its pursuit of a historiography "which sees the past as a meaningless 'promiscuous agglomeration of happenings,'" thus fragmenting "Jewish history into many tiny problems."¹⁴ Scholem understood *Jüdische Wissenschaft* as the "academic mortician" of Judaism. Referring to the polemical purposes of the Western scholars who, in the throes of the emancipation, were embarrassed by, and sought to dismiss the unpleasant evidence of, mysticism in Judaism, he writes:

Factors that have been emphasized and were considered positive from the world-view of assimilation and self-justification now require an entirely new analysis in order to determine what their actual role was in the development of the nation. Factors which were denigrated will appear in a different, more positive light from this point of view. . . . It is possible that what was termed degeneracy will be thought of as a revelation and light and what seemed to [the nineteenth-century historians] will be revealed as a great liv-

12. A. Freimann, *Katalog der Judaica* (Frankfurt: 1922) p. ix. Also listed in this category are the Sadducees and Pharisees.

13. E.g., in PAAJR: M. Wilensky, "Some Notes on Rabbi Israel Loebel's Polemic Against Hasidism," (30, 1962): 141-151; Y. Eliach, "The Russian Dissenting Sects and Their Influence on Israel Baal Shem Tov, Founder of Hasidism," (36, 1968): 57-81; E. Etkes, "Shitato mi-Foalo shel R. Hayim me-Volozhin ke-Teguvat ha-Hevra ha-'Mitnagdim' le-Hasidut," (39, 1972); HUCA: J. Weiss, "The (Great Maggid's Theory of Contemplative Magic," (31, 1960): pp. 137-148.

14. David Biale, *Gershom Scholem* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 46. See M. Buber, "Jüdische Wissenschaft," *Die Welt*, (11 and 12, October 1901); *Jüdische Bewegung*, (Jüdische Verlag: Berlin, 1920), I, pp. 48-58.

ing myth . . . not the washing and mummification of the dead, but the discovery of hidden life by removal of the obfuscating masks.¹⁵

Although both Buber and Scholem were agreed in their rejection of the apologetic-rationalist-philological approach of *Die Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the two were subsequently to follow different directions in their work. A reading of their controversy on the proper post-*Wissenschaft* approach to Hasidism is of considerable interest; for our purposes, moreover, the two approaches help to provide a context within which to view the contributions of Abraham Joshua Heschel.¹⁶

Towards the beginning of the century, Buber, through his lyric German rendition of the Hasidic tale, brought the startling message of Hasidism to the Western Jew and and to the Gentile. He was only the best known figure of the neo-Hasidic revival which included such writers as Berdichevsky, Peretz, Horodetzky, and Y. Steinberg, most of whom were nationalists or members of the intelligentsia rebelling against the traditional pattern of Jewish study.

Gershom Scholem and his school not only repudiated *Jüdische Wissenschaft* but neo-Hasidism as well, particularly Buber's understanding of Hasidism. They pointed to his preference for Hasidic legend over the discursive writings, as well as to his penchant for exposition which emphasized mysticism or existential "decision" at the expense of the real meaning of the text and the centrality of tradition. Though Scholem would not have gone as far as Sh. Hurwitz, who attacked neo-Hasidism for "searching for pearls in piles of garbage," he did adopt almost all of Hurwitz's "critique of Hasidism as a quietistic movement" and of Sabbateanism as a model of historical vitality.¹⁷ He acknowledged Buber's contribution as a groundbreaking effort, but argued that it glossed over the less attractive aspects of Hasidism, was self-serving and was overly selective in its emphasis. As Buber's general thinking moved from mysticism to existentialism, so did his understanding of Hasidism. Thus during the first phase, before World War I, he dealt with the "ecstatic quality" of Hasidism. Later, he emphasized Hasidism's "hallowing the everyday," its concern for the "concrete here and now."

The approach of the dominant Scholem school is no less problematic. Scholem credits the period of Sabbatai Zevi with being the watershed of

15. Biale, *Op. cit.*, p. 11. (Translation emended by editor — S.H.D.)

16. See G. Scholem, "M. Buber's Interpretation of Hasidism," *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1971), pp. 227-251; "M. Buber's Conception of Judaism," *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis* (New York: Schocken, 1976), pp. 126-172; R. Shatz-Uffenheimer, "Man's relation to God and World in Buber's Rendering of the Hasidic Teaching," *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*, ed. Paul Schilpp and Maurice Friedman (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1967), pp. 403-435; Martin Buber, "Replies to My Critics: On Hasidism," *Ibid.*, pp. 731-741; Biale, *Op. cit.*

17. Biale, *Op. cit.*, p. 48. Cf. Stanley Nash, "The Psychology of Dynamic Self-Negation in a Modern Hebrew Writer, Shay Eurwitz (1861-1922)," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, vol. 44, pp. 81-93.

modern Jewish history. He views the false messiah as a liberator who broke the millennial rabbinic hegemony and thereby facilitated, in greater or lesser measure, the emergence of such movements as Haskalah, Zionism, Reform and Hasidism. For Scholem, "pluralism" replaced "normative" as the key word in the new Jewish historiography, providing, alongside of halakhah and philosophy, a place for mysticism, and even such undercurrents as antinomianism.¹⁸

While contributing significantly to the understanding of the Hasidic text, both as to its historical authenticity and its relation to the older kabbalah, the Scholem school betrays at times its own selective weakness for the gnostic, the quietistic and the supposedly Sabbatean elements in the literature of Hasidism. Critics have made their points. R.J.Z. Werblowsky sees Scholem's attempt to raise Sabbateanism to the level of rabbinic Judaism as a dangerous misreading of Jewish history; Kurzweil questions Scholem's historical objectivity in view of the latter's anarchical emphasis on the irrational in contrast to the halakhic and rational elements in Judaism; Jacob Katz is doubtful whether historical sources support a causal relationship between Sabbateanism and modern Jewish movements;¹⁹ while M. Pickarz argues that numerous Hasidic statements, which Scholem traces to Sabbatean texts, merely share a common source in Musar works such as *Sheney Luhot ha-Brit* and *Reyshit Hokhmah*.²⁰

Die Wissenschaft des Judentums, because of its stress on polemics and rationalism, either ignored or demeaned Hasidism. Buber, while cultivating the tale and showing the contemporary relevance of several of the central Hasidic themes, can be faulted for often interpreting Hasidism in terms of his personal philosophy, whether mystical or existential. Scholem, who opened Jewish historiography to the dimension of the mystical and the mythical, has tended to overlook the moral and the enduring religious message of Hasidism, by virtue of his concentration on the Kabbalistic and the Sabbatean, as well as his distance from Hasidic life itself.

Both Buber and Scholem rejected Jewish tradition as a pattern for their personal lives, and both pursued theories which support their own positions. Buber's central emphasis on Hasidism was upon the existential decision. (A favorite tale of his is about the Master who asked his disciples, "What is the most important thing in the world?" One answers, "the Sabbath;" another, "prayer;" a third, "Yom Kippur." "No," the master

18. For an example of the attractiveness of Sabbateanism to a contemporary novelist, see Isaac Bashevis Singer, *A Young Man in Search of Love*, (New York: Doubleday, 1978), p. 7. Cf. Samuel Dresner, "Is Bashevis Singer a Jewish Writer?" *Midstream*, (March, 1980).

19. Cf. Biale, *Op. cit.*, pp. 155, 172-174, 192-193, and the bibliography cited there. For Buber's response to Scholem's strictures, see Buber, "Replies to My Critics," pp. 731-741.

20. *Bimey Zemiḥat ha-Hasidut*, (Jerusalem; Mosad Bialik, 1978). A more polemical approach is adopted by H. Lieberman, "How Jewish 'Researchers' Explore Hasidism" (Hebrew), *Ohel Raḥel* (Brooklyn: Empire Press, 1980), Vol. 1, pp. 1-49. Cf. Scholem, *Devarim Ba-Go* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1975), p. 300, n. 20.

explains, "the most important thing is whatever you are doing at the moment!")

Buber as a religious anarchist rejected the notion of an authoritative revelation and historical tradition. Out of hostility toward both orthodox halakhic Judaism and rational Jewish philosophy, Buber rejected the burden of tradition and created his counter-history by a subjective, mythopoeic "act of decision."²¹ Scholem also labels himself a religious anarchist, but . . . he means something quite different from Buber. He . . . argued that Judaism actually consists of an anarchistic plurality of sources . . . When Scholem calls himself a religious anarchist, he means that the historical tradition, which is the only source of knowledge we have of revelation, contains no one authoritative voice. All that can be learned from the study of history is the *struggle* for absolute values among conflicting voices of authority. Scholem is an anarchist because he believes "the binding character of the Revelation for a collective has disappeared. The word of God no longer serves as a source for the definition of possible contents of a religious tradition and thus of a possible theology."²²

Buber's stress upon mysticism and/or existential decision and Scholem's search for Sabbatean influences, both reflect antinomian sympathies.

For Heschel, Hasidism was neither romanticism, rebellion nor an affirmation of orthodoxy. He could not be labelled a neo-Hasid, though he forsook the Hasidic enclave for the broader Western society; nor did he find Hasidism shot through with Sabbatean elements, though he was well aware of the origins and history of the movement. Indeed, in his understanding of Hasidism, Heschel had no peer. His grasp of the entire range of Jewish literature — Biblical, rabbinic, philosophic and mystical — enabled him to discern in what sense Hasidic writings were contiguous with, or a departure from, the past, where they were original, what elements of earlier Jewish thought they accepted or rejected, and what problems they attempted to address. Philosophically, he was able to place Hasidism within a wider intellectual context; historically, he sought to gather those bits of evidence which, properly evaluated and pieced together, might reveal a hitherto unknown aspect of a personality or an event. His mastery of Hasidic texts themselves was such that when works were cited during discussions, he usually had no need to see the printed volume to quote from it extensively. But his Hasidic understanding went beyond books. He was intimately familiar with Hasidism as a living phenomenon, was privy to the legacy of tradition handed down from several Hasidic dynasties because of his early upbringing and continued association, and he had remarkable sensitivity to the core of Hasidic authenticity as it was

21. "Buber is dissatisfied with Hasidism because it does not expand the realm of revelation," argues Rivkah Schatz, "and in this he sees its failure . . . [But], if Hasidism had been more universal and had dared to broaden the 'horizon of revelation,' instead of confining itself from the start to the revelation in the Torah, it would have achieved this greatness at the price of antinomianism, . . . and is it not thus that we must understand Buber's position?" (Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer, *Op. cit.*, p. 419).

22. Biale, *Op. cit.*, pp. 80 and 98.

transmitted from generation to generation. Heschel's control of the material and acquaintance with the oral tradition of the movement were joined by highly disciplined study habits. During his relatively short life, characterized by some wandering and dislocation, he was the author of more than a dozen major works in several different languages.

It has been suggested that the low estimate in which Hasidism was formerly held in scholarly circles may have encouraged Heschel in his earlier writings to omit all but the most necessary references to Hasidic material in support of his theories. The tragic end of Eastern European Jewry, however, brought new respect for what it had produced. This, together with the growing acceptance of Heschel's own works, permitted him to make more open use of Hasidic writings. It is of interest that his first book, *Der Shem ha-Meforash Mentsh* (1933), a youthful volume of Yiddish poetry, was not listed in the initial bibliography of his works which appeared in 1959, but is present in the updated 1965 version.²³

Heschel observed privately more than once that "after the Holocaust, Jewish scholarship should be devoted to that which advances Yiddishkeit." He was warning that in the terribly weakened position in which Jews now found themselves, with their very survival at stake, and with the demise of the great centers of Jewish authority and guidance, they dared not expend their limited resources on hairsplitting studies or the exposure of the unseemly side of Jewish life. He was speaking to a situation in which some Jewish scholars were content to edit texts, collect footnotes and frown upon ideas, questioning, for instance, whether there was such a thing as Jewish theology, while others explored the Jewish "underworld," dwelling upon forgeries and heresies.²⁴ Heschel preferred to devote himself, in a series of works, to delineating wide areas of Jewish creativity — Biblical, rabbinic, medieval and Hasidic. Even his popular survey of Eastern European Jewry, which reflects the enduring values of a thousand years of Ashkenazic Jewry, stands in marked contrast to the explorations of the occasionally insipid, bizarre and ribald. If Heschel may be faulted, it is in his tendency toward Hasidic apologetics and his preference to stay clear of the ignoble and dark features which are inevitable in a world which included millions. To limit Jewish research in any way, however praiseworthy the motive, may result in an incomplete view of the subject. The reader and the student must submit the final verdict as to the relative reliability of those who sought, for whatever reasons, to portray a different and often more negative picture than did Heschel.

23. F. Rothschild, ed., *Between God and Man: from the Writings of Abraham J. Heschel* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959; Free Press, 1965).

24. An examination of the topics selected for doctoral dissertations in Jewish studies during the past thirty years confirms Heschel's concern.

Rethinking Zionism: The Challenge of Shlomo Avineri

WILLIAM KLUBACK

MORE OFTEN THAN NOT SERIOUS THINKING fails to find an audience. Although Shlomo Avineri has lectured at many well-known American universities and has written several authoritative books, among which are *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* and *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, we cannot assume that the intelligent reader is necessarily acquainted with his thought. In June 1970 he published an article in *Commentary*, "The Palestinians and Israel," which caused much debate and a year later he edited a volume entitled *Israel and the Palestinians*, which I believe remains one of the most reasonable and prudent discussions of the topic. In reading the book more than a decade later, one gets the eerie feeling that little has changed, and whatever has, has been for the worse. The refusal to accept each other's legitimacy remains the stumbling block to reasonable decisions and actions.

Avineri is a distinguished political theorist, a member of the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University, and a man who takes political discussion seriously. He is a political being in the most sophisticated sense: concerned with reasonable action as a category of human thought. His most recent book is *The Making of Modern Zionism*, and in it we are confronted with the rethinking which every situation demands of us. The purpose of this paper is to elaborate upon the meaning and value of this rethinking.

Two elements are in conflict — Jewish history and the Zionist revolution — and they interact and contradict each other:

building a Jewish commonwealth in Israel always entailed — and will entail — strong elements of hardship. For this reason Zionism had to be — and still is — also a far-reaching *social* revolution. Zionism is, after all, also a revolution against Jewish history, not only against the gentile world.¹

If we comprehend Zionism as a revolution from and against Jewish history, then we grasp it as the struggle against accommodation to the existing historical and ideological conditions of exile; we comprehend it as eternal negation, in and through which the reality of exile is to be redeemed. If, for a moment, we think of the words of A.D. Gordon, "Exile

1. *The Making of Modern Zionism* (New York, 1981), p. 226.

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can emerge in the land of Israel as well as in the lands of the Diaspora itself,"² we realize that social revolutions seem to fail, that they are inadequate, that they bring with them the source of their own rejection and distortion. What is overcome is not necessarily eliminated. The Zionist revolution remains incomplete, bears within it the source of its return to a life which it put aside, an ethical vision which is threatened by the demands of political, social and economic needs, reflecting the impact of the moments, the cry of the day, the competition of power, and the lure of wealth.

Infused and permeated with an ideal, the Zionist revolution (a term which we must use with caution because it implies a vision with varying and even contrasting perspectives), sought to establish in Israel a way of life which would be exemplary, which would embody a moral, spiritual, and social difference in the political, economic, and social existence of a people whose uniqueness would be a negation and a fulfillment of its life in the Diaspora.

Israel can continue to be the normative focus of identity for Jews abroad only if it is different from Jewish life in the Diaspora. If Israel becomes only a mirror-image of Diaspora life, then it will lose its unique identification for world Jewry.³

This difference must be rooted not only in the socioeconomic, but in the spiritual fabric of its life. The Zionist revolution "substituted a secular self-identity of the Jews as a nation for the traditional and Orthodox self-identity in religious terms."⁴ Self-identity means the consciousness of a new life, a new relationship between man and the land, an ennoblement of work, the avoidance of a servile class, a sense of justice and equality, public responsibility, the embodiment of the universal in the particular, the realization of the inseparability of the personal and the public, the reverence and tenderness for the individual and the unique. This revolution denies class distinction and racial antagonism; its struggle is for the dignity of man and his right to education, employment, and spiritual independence.

The consequence is that

the concern for Israel has wider implications: for the communal, collective, and public fate of the State of Israel. It is not only what happens to the inhabitants of Israel, but what happens to Israel as a body politic. . . . Other Jewish communities are merely aggregates of individuals, and as such they have no normative standing as a public entity. Israel, on the other hand, is conceived not only as an aggregate of its population, but its very existence has immanent value and normative standing.⁵

Israel is the essence of Jewish existence. Identity means more than political and ideological support, pride in the military and its economic

2. Ibid., p. 225.

3. Ibid., p. 223.

4. Ibid., p. 13.

5. Ibid., p. 221.

consequences; it transcends momentary attachments to, or romantic flirtations with, past historical glories, it forms an ethical dimension of being which is dialectical for all Jewish communities; the quality of its existence is the central concern. Here we begin to comprehend the meaning of the Zionist revolution, its claim to be the realization of the spiritual community of world Jewry, to embody values which give Israel a unique place in the world.

Faced with the meaning of the Zionist revolution, the values it has revealed, and the difference that it has announced, we are forced to ask if this difference has evolved, has found embodiment and become an effective force, or if it remains a romantic vision. Avineri puts the problem clearly:

Twenty years ago, the difference between the Jewish community in Israel and Diaspora Jewry — socially, intellectually and economically — was far greater than it is today. Not that Diaspora Jewry became similar to Israeli society, but Israel comes to resemble the Diaspora.⁶

The Zionist revolution — at least, from Avineri's view — implied more than a political reality; it presupposed a radical social and intellectual change: the exile was to be rooted out of the people, its parasitic qualities eliminated. This does not simply mean a changed land, language, or politic; it signifies a revolution of the soul. This revolution and reformation are the challenges of Jewish existence. Deeply threatening to this reality is the ever-increasing number of Arab laborers in major areas of the Israeli economy.

When Israel was established in 1948, it was much nearer to that ideal that today, as practically all the work done in the economy was carved out by Jews. Today, mainly due to the influx of Arab labor from the West Bank and Gaza, sizeable sectors of the Israeli economy have seen the disappearance of Jewish workers from manual jobs and their substitution by Arab laborers. In whole areas of agriculture, the building industry, and certain menial service occupations, most of the manual work is done by Arabs.⁷

The problem is of gigantic proportions, threatening to compromise and reduce the nature of Israeli society to the realities of Jewish life in the Diaspora. It threatens to burden society with a servile class, the source of social unrest, political ferment, economic imbalance. The life of a people, Avineri believes, cannot, without grave spiritual harm, be torn between what becomes designated as servile labor and white-collar work; work covers all human activities with its dignity and value, from the tilling of the soil, the building of roads and houses, to the sciences and the arts. The creation of a servile class erodes the quality of life and brings with it the uprooted and the alienated, violence and class antagonisms. "All this suggests an erosion of Israeli society's social revolutionary uniqueness."⁸

6. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

This endangerment of Israel's social revolutionary uniqueness is a crisis of the spirit; it forces us to realize that political and moral life are inseparable. Avineri's emphasis and analysis may be debatable for those whose concern is with immediate political survival. It may be even questionable whether Avineri has placed the proper weight on the problem which is crucial to Israel's survival as a democratic society. This is a question of values, a challenge revealing the need to discuss the nature of social values, and their reality for Israel.

Nothing appears more dangerous than this disappearance of manual work as a dignified activity. What Avineri is making us aware of is that the crisis in Israel is a socioeconomic reality; it goes beyond, but belongs to, the political. We are confronted with a moral crisis. We are forced to face problems which threaten the quality of life, diminishing that "difference" which is Israel's burden and responsibility, that gives it distinct moral and dialectical reality.

For the Zionist revolution is very basically a permanent revolution against those powerful forces in Jewish history, existing, at least partially, within the Jewish people, which turned the Jews from a self-reliant people into a community living at the margin of and sometimes living off alien communities.⁹

Knowing that man and society retreat easily from the responsibility and burden of the ideal, we believe, nevertheless, that human reason overcomes difficulty, that courage and persistence are the forces of human greatness and uniqueness, of social justice and equality of opportunity.

Zionism is a revolution against those trends in the Jewish people, which enabled the Jews to accommodate as individuals even to the harshest realities of Exile in situations of almost total powerlessness, yet perpetuated Exile as a way of life for the Jewish people as a whole. Zionism is an attempt to bring back into Jewish life the supremacy of the public, communitarian, and social aspects at the expense of personal ease, bourgeois comfort, and good life of the individual.¹⁰

What is fundamental to Avineri's argument is the demand that the struggle for a society that is different from the one in the Diaspora become the self-conscious reality of Israel's existence, its moral and political responsibility. Social justice, the nobility of work, the denial of a servile class become the elements of the body politic. Society is the expression of the life of the people and every aspect of this reality contributes to the dignity or distortion of the whole; the individual has a public responsibility. The supremacy of public responsibility outweighs the laissez-faire attitude which denies the claim of social responsibility over personal comfort.

Zionism without social is inconceivable. This idea is fundamental:

Socialist Zionism is not an artificial aggregation or a mechanical combination of two separate visions and wills. Zionism on one hand and socialism on

9. Ibid., p. 226.

10. Ibid.

the other. . . . Neither Zionism nor socialism comes to us from the outside; they originate in the will and the urges of a people who live by their own labor . . . for only an image of a creative society of workers, free and enjoying equal rights, can guarantee independence, liberty and equality to all members of the Jewish people and all nations of the world.¹¹

There is a moral responsibility which is commensurate with the Zionist revolution, and that imposes itself upon the world Jewish community and upon the community of mankind.

The concept of Zionism must be continually discussed and developed; it is not fixed, its reality belongs to man's reason. It envisions a close and necessary link between morality and politics, between a politic which is not based upon cultural and national imperialism, but one that takes seriously self-determination, equality, and the sense of justice. Avineri's polemic on the vital issues of Israel's moral and political goals is inseparable from his belief that the government's behavior toward peoples under its military control must be guided by the same sense of justice which it hopes to embody in its own community. If we speak of socialism and Zionism in the same breath, are we not spelling out an intense belief in the economic and social basis of human rights? Socialism as Zionism and Zionism as Socialism reflect a concept of society, a quality of life, a moral and political commitment to reasonableness, pluralism, and freedom; it confirms these foundations as authoritative. Zionism is Socialism if it maintains the ideal of public responsibility where the personal is subordinated to the public, where the needs and rights of society determine those of the individual, and where what is public and what is personal are intimately related. Socialism is Zionism when it recognizes the rights of people to throw off the word *pariah* from their life, to enjoy independence with other people, to respect and be respected, to contribute and be contributed to. Nachman Syrkin expressed it well:

The Jews have . . . been presented with the opportunity to be the first to realize the socialist vision, because they are placed in an unusual situation in that they are forced to find a homeland and establish a state. This is the tragic element of their historic fate, but it is also a unique historical mission. What is generally the vision of a few will become a great national movement among the Jews, what is utopian in other contexts is a necessity for the Jews.¹²

The fact that the destructive forces of self-righteousness and hatred lie at the ground of reality makes the struggle for the reasonable more painful and demanding, but it cannot be evaded. The struggle is never separable from hopes and visions. These permeated the works and actions of A.D. Gordon and Ben Gurion. The names are innumerable when we think of those who fought for dreams with courage and faith, but the conflict between reasonable and real remains without issue. They are

11. "Mishnato Shel David Ben Gurion," I:190-91, in Avineri, p. 204.

12. "The Jewish Problem and the Jewish State," in Avineri, p. 137.

moments of each other, belonging to each other in the intimacy of their opposition. The defeat of the reasonable is a genuine possibility, but with it comes the end of the real. The struggle for its realization is inseparable from physical and spiritual survival.

Therefore Zionism has ultimately no chance unless it constantly revolutionizes Jewish life in Israel and stops it from coagulating into the traditional historical molds of Jewish social and economic behavior.¹³

The revolutionary movement in Jewish life flows from the center to Jewish communities in the Diaspora; its effect stimulates reactions in the other communities, changing and molding their values in community with those of Israel, but community also means flow from the Diaspora to the center. Community is mutuality. We cannot think of stagnation and moral atrophy outside of Israel and vital struggle and development within her. Yet, the uniqueness of Israel makes us aware that only she can resolve the vital problems of social and political existence. The constant revolutionary movement needed to change the character of Jewish life is the obligation of each generation.

We must comprehend his valuation that

Israel can, therefore, remain for the long range the normative center for world Jewry only if it will remain a society different from Jewish society in the Diaspora.¹⁴

No longer a marginal ideology competing for survival with assimilationism, religious schemes of redemption, revolutionary ideas, and dreams of social and political change, Zionism is now the "public dimension of the Jewish people." This fact is a revolutionary change, it is a challenge to ways of life which Jews attained in the Diaspora, and which now are brought into question. The State of Israel forces us to consider those questions which reflect deeply a concern for the quality and meaning of life. This concern is at the core of Zionist thought, the visions which excited and moved its founders. Avineri asks us to rethink the thoughts of the founders, to comprehend that to found is to exercise authority, that we live within the traditions which they established. The values which they believed in have become fundamental. The nature of society and the quality of life are the basic issues of this polemic. Avineri asks us to think again about the foundations. Nothing is more difficult or dangerous than to ask a people to think and, in particular, to ponder again the sources of its existence, to reflect upon contemporary attitudes and opinions, and to question the goals of momentary policies. The work of Avineri forces us into such self-criticism, the exploration of the self-portrait. Should a philosopher ask us to do less?

13. Avineri, p. 227.

14. Ibid.

Some Difficulties in Dialogue

HENRY BAMBERGER

I

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT RECENT discussions of the status and problems of Jewish-Christian dialogue appeared in the Winter, 1981, issue of the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (Vol. 18, No. 1) as part of a symposium by German and American theologians entitled "From Holocaust to Dialogue." This was an article by Hans Hermann Henrix which bore the deceptively quiet title, "International Encounter as a Necessity for Jewish-Christian Dialogue in Germany." In this study, he develops a significant "typology of Jewish-Christian dialogue" which lies beyond the scope of this article. Furthermore, he raises two important points which have been given insufficient attention by Jews involved in dialogue.

The first of these is his concern with "asymmetry" in dialogue. He comes to this idea initially from experiencing the overwhelming "asymmetry of numbers" of Christians and Jews in Germany which leads him to the realization that if dialogue is to continue in his country it will need to involve Jews from other parts of the world. As we shall see, however, this concept has much deeper implications for the dialogue enterprise.

Second, toward the end of the article, Henrix asserts that for real dialogue to be possible, "a Christian theology of Judaism is required" and adds that the "work on such a theology is in progress" (p. 5). He then raises the question of whether there is an equivalent need for a Jewish theology of Christianity. While he is aware that this is a question for Jews rather than Christians to answer, he does suggest that "at the present stage of dialogue it is appropriate for Christian theologians to request from their Jewish partners that the possibility of a . . . Jewish theology of Christianity be examined" (p. 6).

II

As yet, no really satisfactory theology of Christianity has been offered by Jews. Two approaches are reasonably popular, one of which evades Christianity and one of which degrades Christianity. Interestingly, it is the second of these which has found a fair amount of acceptance among Christian thinkers, as we shall see.

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The first approach deals with Christians without considering Christianity. This is done by treating Christians as Noahites, people who observe the seven commandments which Jewish tradition considers binding on the descendants of Noah — i.e., all mankind. Those who observe these laws — the prohibitions against murder, idolatry, adultery, blasphemy, theft, and eating the limb of a living animal, and the positive commandment of establishing just laws and courts — are held to be fulfilling the covenant established by God with Noah and his sons. Therefore, they are clearly in a satisfactory relationship with God. Since it has long been established that Christianity is not idolatrous, it is clear that even a reasonably good Christian observes these seven ordinances. Even the debate as to whether these laws must be obeyed out of a recognition of God (as opposed to obeying them out of reason) does not enter into consideration when discussing believing Christians who certainly recognize and worship Him.

By treating Christians as *b'nai Noah*, it is possible to say that they are within a covenant with God as understood by Jewish tradition; therefore, there need be no hesitation about working with them on social action or social service projects. If we so choose, we may even participate in dialogue with each of them. However, in following this line of reasoning, we have not dealt with — or even considered — Christianity. We have only pointed out that the set of individuals called *b'nai Noah* includes a sub-set called Christians and that therefore we may deal with the sub-set as part of the larger grouping without necessarily paying any attention to the elements which distinguish its members from the larger group. In effect, we have suggested that Christians are acceptable on some level to God (and therefore to us) not *because* of what they believe but *despite* what they believe. This is, obviously, not a theology of Christianity.

The second approach is best typified by Franz Rosenzweig's picture of Judaism as the light, Christianity the ray, or of Christianity as the way, Judaism the goal. In some way, the Jew, or Judaism, is central to the human quest for the divine, a quest upon which Christianity still finds itself. This is, of course, actually a variant of the idea that Judaism is wholly satisfactory and available *for Jews* but is not within the grasp of the rest of humanity. Christianity is, then, the vehicle by which the truths of Judaism — especially the doctrine of monotheism — become accessible to the non-Jewish world.

This line of thought was, in a sense, anticipated by Maimonides who wrote:

The thought of the Creator of the world is beyond the power of men to grasp, for their ways are not His ways and their thoughts are not His thoughts. All the words of Jesus the Nazarene and of Mohammed, who arose after him, came into being, only in order to make straight the road for the King Messiah, who would perfect the world to serve God together, as it is

said, Then I shall turn all the peoples into a clear speech, that they may all call upon the Lord and serve him shoulder to shoulder.¹

This approach seems to offer a distinctive role to Christianity. However, this appearance is an illusion. For one thing, it does not differentiate between Christianity and Judaism's other "daughter religion," Islam. (Note that Maimonides does mention both, although Rosenzweig avoided the consideration of Islam as far as possible.) It could certainly be argued that Islam teaches monotheism in a style which is far more congenial to Judaism than Christian trinitarianism and that, moreover, it reaches more people. However, in formulating a theology of Christianity, it is not important to demonstrate its superiority or inferiority to Islam but rather to consider it in its uniqueness. Unless — or until — it is demonstrated that this type of approach to Christianity does not apply in the same way to Islam, then we have, at best, a first step toward understanding both — but a theology of neither.

Furthermore, while those who follow this line of reasoning today — among them a significant number of Christian thinkers — do so with the full intention of showing respect to Christianity, we must question whether this respect is, in fact, shown. We find, rather, that this tends to lead to the implication that Christianity is really a "watered-down" or paganized Judaism, suited only for those who are unable, for whatever reason, to take on the true insights that Judaism offers.² If the goal is truly significant, it is always more important than the way (or ways) which lead to it; the worth of a journey depends upon its goal. The "way" must always be derivative and, therefore, it is inferior to that which is to be reached or attained. The same is true of the ray and the source which generates it; the sun provides our light and heat — and therefore our lives — even when it has set and none of its rays reach us directly. The source is always above its emanations.³

III

At least two factors have prevented (or retarded) the development of a Jewish theology of Christianity. In considering them, we will note that each is due to an asymmetry of time. This cannot be changed and is, therefore, more basic than the asymmetry of numbers which was considered by Dr. Henrix.

First, we note the fact that while it is not adequate to a theology of

1. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhoh Melakhim*, 11:4, as translated by Robert Gordis, in *The Root and the Branch; Judaism and the Free Society* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press), p. 50.

2. See the last paragraph of the quotation from Maimonides, *Ibid.*, p. 51.

3. Of course, no one who is serious about dialogue or a Jewish theology of Christianity would suggest that all the valuable elements in Christianity are Jewish and that all else to be found in Christianity is pagan and, therefore, valueless at best. However, this view is not as far from Rosenzweig's position as he believed.

Christianity to consider it merely a derivative religion, it *does* derive historically from Judaism. This is a datum which may not be ignored. Christianity must — and does — consider its relationship to Judaism in defining itself. It is not just that Jesus was a Jew or even that all of his original followers were Jewish.⁴ In fact, Christianity accepted the Jewish scriptures as its own, used much Jewish terminology (although often with new meanings), and, indeed, considered itself the “new Israel.” Thus, the relationship of Judaism to Christianity, and, later, the fact of Judaism’s continued viability despite the existence of Christianity, are necessary concerns for the younger religion.

For Judaism, however, the fact that Christianity exists has not been significant for our self-understanding or even a matter of deep religious concern. Had Christianity never come into being, Judaism could still have continued. Indeed, Judaism looks back on more than a millenium of pre-Christian growth and functioning. Christianity must have some understanding of Judaism to understand itself; Judaism needs an understanding of Christianity only in order to understand Christianity.

It is necessary to go farther, however, and point out that there is a built-in problem for an older religion which confronts a newer one. A new religion can, if it so wishes, easily ascribe a continued, although perhaps limited, role to its predecessor. The reverse is far more difficult.

Thus, many Christian theologians have been able to say that Judaism provided a means by which Jews could enter into an acceptable relationship with God, and that it still does, that there is no need for a Jew to be other than he has been. He need not become a Christian, since he already has a path to God which is the one taken by Jews from the days of Abraham to the beginning of Christianity, and beyond. However, they say that Judaism was not — and is not — able to appeal to and embrace the Gentile world. Therefore, God gave a new revelation and created a new and better path. A new covenant exists for the world. Jews are not excluded from this new covenant, of course; they may walk the new path if they wish. However, the old covenant is not invalidated by the coming into being of a new one; the old path still leads, however indirectly, to the desired goal. Missions to the Jews are, therefore, unnecessary — perhaps even improper — but the remainder of the world needed — and needs — Christianity.

In the same way, it is not difficult for those Protestant thinkers who wish to do so to find a way to deal with the continued existence of the Roman Catholic Church. They need only point out that the Church of

4. In contrast — Abraham and his family are all said to have come from Ur, but Judaism does not need to examine its relationship to the life and thought of Ur for self-understanding. The parallels and contrasts may be interesting or even enlightening, but they are not basic. In fact, over the years they were easily forgotten. As archeologists have re-discovered facts about Ur, they have provided us with information but not with new revelations.

Rome was the (or “a”) locus of Christian thought and belief from the first or second century of this era until the Reformation; it remains a valid expression of Christianity today, although not the only one. (The wide variety within Protestantism makes it more comfortable, perhaps, for Protestant thinkers to deal with Catholicism as one more Christian church, but even if there were only one “Protestant Church,” the same line of reasoning would be available.) The Protestant may insist that there were historical and/or theological reasons that made the development of new, non-Catholic, forms of Christianity necessary; he may feel that the Protestant movement — or his particular church — is a higher, truer form of Christianity than ever could be found within Catholicism. With all this, he may still affirm that many people may find salvation within the Catholic Church.

It is more difficult for the older religion to find a place in its thought for the younger. For the Catholic theologian, a different line of thought suggests itself: Given the fact that the Church needed cleansing, and the further fact that the Catholic Church could — and did — cleanse itself and find new life in the counter-Reformation, what need is there for Protestantism? Even if it were admitted, for the sake of argument, that nothing less than a movement such as the one which Luther led would have provided a sufficient shock to the church establishment of his day to bring about the needed reforms, now that the changes have taken place, why should the Protestant movement continue to exist? This problem has, in fact, remained a serious one for Roman Catholics. It remains to be seen whether Catholic theology can find a better role for Protestants than that of “separated brethren.”⁵

The problem also faces Judaism in its attempt to deal with Christianity. At one time, as much as 10% of the population of the Roman Empire was either Jewish or in some way affiliated with Judaism.⁶ Thus, it is not true that Judaism was incapable of reaching out to a large segment of the Gentile world. Is it possible, then, for Jews to find a meaningful theological role for Christianity? To do so, we will have to transcend the problems faced by every senior religion in confronting a newer one.⁷

5. One cannot help feeling that although the phrase “separated brethren” is used by Catholics as if it means only “separated from the Catholic fellowship,” it actually carries a distinct implication of “separated from the Catholic truth.”

6. Uriah Zevi Engelman, “Sources of Jewish Statistics” in *The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion*, ed. Louis Finkelstein (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1949), p. 1179.

7. This problem continues to present itself as new religions come into being. I have been unable to find any real attempt by Protestants to find meaning in the claims of Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and the like, much less the more recent movements. Perhaps it is too soon to expect anything of the sort. An attempt by a Roman Catholic to deal seriously with some of the new “cult” groups is found in “The Christian Response to the New Religions” by John A. Saliba in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 18:3 (Summer, 1981): 451 ff.

IV

A different kind of problem confronts Jews who wish to create a theology of Christianity, especially if it is to deal with the distinctive Christian belief in Jesus of Nazareth. Anyone who attempts to break new ground in this area may be sure of danger from two opposite directions.

The first will be an almost certain attack by Jews. There are those who will insist that anyone who speaks at all positively about Jesus is a pseudo-Christian, a heretic, a traitor seeking to destroy Judaism. We have but to recall the vitriolic hostility directed against the late Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath when his book, *Can Faith Survive?*, included a chapter entitled, "Jesus, Man of My People." In it, there was no attempt to offer any new theological insight or approach. Rather, Eisendrath suggested that the time had come to include the "Jesus of history" in our teaching of Jewish heroes of the first century, along with Hillel and Johanan ben Zaccai.

There are many possible reasons for rejecting this suggestion. There is a very real question whether it is actually possible to separate the facts concerning the "historical Jesus" from the beliefs about him which have built up over the centuries (or which developed early in Christianity). There is also the possibility — many would say the probability — that Jewish children would be confused by the presentation of Jesus as a Jewish teacher and the rejection of the same person when seen by their friends as a redeemer.

However, these and other reasoned arguments were overshadowed by malicious attacks on Rabbi Eisendrath's Jewish and personal integrity. This was not scholarly debate or dispute over facts and ideas; it was, at best, name-calling, and, at its worst, outright character assassination. Anyone who attempts to offer a positive Jewish theology of Jesus must be prepared to be the target of similar *ad hominem* attacks from within the Jewish community.

In essence, this is a simple enough problem to deal with. It can be solved by courage, or even by a resolute determination not to read these attacks. Of greater concern, however, is the second source of danger.

In the decade or so that various "Hebrew Christian" or "Jews for Jesus" groups have become prominent, they have frequently shown a willingness to distort not only the meaning of classic writings but also the intent of contemporary works. Therefore, anyone who wishes to write positively about Christianity, in general, or Jesus, in particular, must be concerned that he or she will be quoted out of context or even be consciously misquoted. No one will refuse to write because of the possibility that he may be misunderstood. Many may well hesitate to publish when there is reason to believe that others will intentionally misrepresent what has been said.

V

Why, then, take on the task? For several years, I have felt the need for a Jewish theology of Christianity which would be more satisfactory than those which we have considered. My contact with some wonderful people who are dedicated Christians — especially those whom I met through the Dutchess Interfaith Council in Poughkeepsie, NY — convinced me of the need for such work. The intervening years have made it clear to me that recognizing the need and developing the new insights are two very different tasks. Nevertheless, some preliminary thoughts may be offered in the hope that they will stimulate others.

First, we must stress that, as far as the person and meaning of Jesus of Nazareth is concerned, Jews and Christians will not come to a common understanding. That Jews cannot accept the divinity of any human being, that we cannot accept the suggestion that the Messiah has already come, that we do not accept the idea that Jesus was the greatest religious teacher and exemplar of all time — all this has been made clear by Jewish writers and thinkers many times over. No new Jewish theology of Christianity will materially change this reality.

This does not mean, however, that there is nothing more to say. There is, for example, the question of the Christian community. What can we say of it?

We have suggested above that to understand Christians as Noahites is inadequate. This does not mean, of course, that it is wholly inaccurate. We must realize that one cannot be a good — or even reasonably good — Christian without obeying the seven laws of the Children of Noah. Our task is to go on from that point.

What differentiates Christians from other Noachites? The first point which we might mention is the fact that they form a community. The seven Noachite laws are, on the whole, intended for the individual. While the law concerning just courts demands a functioning society, it is possible — and, indeed, mandatory — for an individual to observe the other six laws even where he is alone in doing so. There is no reason to believe that a Noachite was expected to join with others or to be particularly concerned about them. Had every inhabitant of Rome in the first century B.C.E. lived according to the Noachite laws — a condition far from the actual case — there might not have been any mutual recognition of their status or any effort to join together.

This is not true of Christianity. From earliest times, Christians have joined together for worship and instruction. Even when individuals have separated themselves from the rest of the community as monks, hermits or nuns, they have recognized their essential connection to the rest of their co-religionists through the “Church Invisible.”

There is, moreover, the fact that Christians believe in God. This God-

belief, moreover, derives in large part from the Hebrew Scriptures. While by no means identical with Jewish belief, it is so close that most authorities, while not accepting it as true, recognized that it was not idolatrous.

We must also recognize that this self-conscious community not only believes that God exists but also seeks to serve Him in this world. Once again, Jews and Christians will often disagree about what is proper service of God; this will apply not only to the specific questions of the day, but to the way in which the serving communities are to relate to one another and to the rest of the world.⁸ Still, it should be possible for each to recognize the other's commitment to God's service and to bringing about His kingdom on earth.

This does not mean that Jews need to accept the Christian claim that they are chosen by God. It does mean that we must acknowledge that they have chosen to serve God as a community. To them, we may well apply Jean Baer's telling phrase, "the self-chosen."⁹

With this in mind, we may return once more to the figure of Jesus. Whatever the facts concerning the "historical Jesus" may be, however much remains unknown, we do know that the Jesus of Christian tradition is the focus of a God-choosing community. Therefore, the Christian will see "his Jesus" as the one who, in some fashion, made it possible for the church to come to love and serve God, and in this he will not be wrong.

8. There is still much truth in the old story of the adherent of one faith who consoles a devotee of another, "We should both remember that we serve the same God, you in your way — and I in His."

9. Ms. Baer uses the term entirely differently as the title of her book about prominent Jews of our day. See Jean Baer, *The Self-Chosen* (New York: Arbor Books, 1982).

*Jews, Arabs and Japanese: Letters by Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook**

BEN ZION BOKSER

Introduction

RABBI KOOK LIVED IN MANY WORLDS. HE was a master of halakhah, and, as Chief Rabbi of Jewish Palestine prior to the rise of the state of Israel, it was his task to interpret the vast corpus of Talmudic law and apply its provisions to the problems of his time. But he was also a mystic, an advocate of the Cabbala and Hasidism, and he called for openness to new illumination which he believed was vouchsafed to those ready to embrace it. The passion of his life was the rebuilding of Erez Yisrael, and he sought to aid it in every way possible. His love reached out to all people, regardless of nationality, race or religion. This love was for him at the heart of Judaism, and its highest goal was to sensitize Jews to that love, so that through them this sensitivity might also touch the rest of mankind.

It is particularly this higher love which is reflected in the three letters of Rabbi Kook which follow. In one he protests against an article disparaging the Arabs, that had appeared in a Mizrahi-sponsored periodical, *Hai-vri*. In the other two letters he commends a rabbi who tried to disseminate the teachings of Judaism among the Japanese people, but criticizes a pamphlet which he had written toward that end because it was disrespectful of other faiths. There is also in that letter a criticism of the rabbi for having ignored the historical differences in the diverse strata of Jewish religious literature and treating them all as part of one category of Torah. At the same time Rabbi Kook protests a yielding to modernism in embracing an Enlightenment concept that religion is only an assumption. For him it was the highest certainty without which life declines to drift and meaninglessness. All these issues are still with us and Rabbi Kook's thinking remains relevant for our own understanding of our faith in the context of our time.

* These letters will appear in a volume of Rabbi Kook's writings, edited by Rabbi Bokser, and to be published by The Crossroads Publishing Co.

I

By the grace of God, the holy city of Jaffa, may it be rebuilt and established, 10 Kislev, 5672 (1912).

To my heart's beloved, the rabbi who is distinguished in Torah, and wisdom, and piety, and the pure fear of God, a man of many good deeds in Israel, Meir Berlin, may he live to a long and good life. Amen.

My beloved one, I find myself under a holy obligation to call your honor's attention to the style of the article, "Judah the Watchman of the Orchard," which appeared in volume 44 of *Haivri*. It presents a mentality of hatred for the Arabs and the stirring up of the Hebrew watchman with words that are full of the revolutionary spirit. This is not in accordance with our goal and it is altogether inappropriate in the present circumstances. The slogan, "Against the Enemy," when it appears in a Hebrew periodical directed against the Arabs, can effect incalculable damage. It offers a ready-made weapon in the hands of our many enemies who probe every word in order to find political accusation against the Jewish people. Your honor surely knows that we have Arabs who read Hebrew and also write Hebrew. Every expression of hatred for the native population or even the slightest suspicion of a revolutionary tendency is at once translated into Turkish and sent to the capital, to the most official places and to those who are most dangerous to us. Apart from external enemies, we have, due to our many sins, a whole host of enemies from within, like Fresco¹ and his like, who know how to turn such words into delicacies for Satan. I beg you, my friend, for the sake of the God of Israel, who chose our beloved land, who has begun to show us a glimmer of the light of His kindness and His truth, to remember His holy people, and to give them a foothold in Judah, do not allow such words in your esteemed newspaper. Their benefit is *nil*, and the damage they can cause is immense. On the contrary, to the extent possible, it is for us to portray the pleasant circumstances of a relationship of peace and brotherliness between the good active people in our *yishuv* (community) and the Arabs living on the land, obviously the best among them. Preoccupation forces me to be brief when it would be appropriate to elaborate.

With respect and sincere blessing from the Holy Land, your friend who loves you truly with a full heart.

Igrot, Vol. II, letter 398.

1. David Fresco was a Jew living in Istanbul, who was active in spreading hostility toward Zionism among the Turks and the Arabs.

II

By the grace of God, the holy city of Jaffa, may it be rebuilt and established, 28 Sivan 5673 (1913).

To his honor, the wise and precious Rabbi Aaron Simcha Blumenthal, may the light of his life continue to shine, peace.

The pamphlet, "The Religion of Israel," which your honor has written, delighted me. Its substance and style are desirable, and are likely to win esteem for the Torah and our faith. Your honor may use it as a force to exert an inner influence, suitable for our responding to the call in the verse: "Declare His glory among the nations" (Ps. 96:3), and your essay will serve as a model for this. However, as it is, it will not meet its objective for various reasons, some of which I shall explain briefly.

1) One can only come to a distant people, in the spiritual sense, with what is written explicitly, and not with citations of homilies (aggadah) and tradition, unless one separates the sources and makes it clear that this is written in the Torah, that the tradition of the people states thus and so. Your honor has, in many places, mixed up statements of tradition with explicit teachings in the Torah.

2) The book, *Wisdom of the Soul*, by Weisel, on which your honor elaborated, has nothing new for a cultured people like the Japanese and, in many basic teachings, it has already become obsolete in the light of the new science.

3) One cannot offer an advanced body of religious teaching to this people with expressions that disparage the founders of other faiths, whoever they may be. It is for us to speak only about the holy benefits of the Torah of the Lord. The negative is understood by itself.

There are other matters to call your attention to, but I cannot now elaborate.

Igrot, Vol. II, letter 557.

III

By the grace of God, the holy city of Jaffa, may it be
rebuilt and established, 5 Adar 5674 (1914).

To his honor, the rabbi who is distinguished in Torah and in piety, our master Rabbi Aaron Simcha Blumenthal, may the light of his life continue to shine.

I examined your esteemed pamphlet, which bears the name "The Religion of Israel and its Mission," and I found it a source of delight. I will not discourage the thought which your honor entertains to translate it into English in order to spread its ideas in Japan. This enlightened and free people, which is now awakening from its long slumber, with renewed vitality, is indeed suited to confront the illumination of Judaism with a clearer perspective than other nations whose spiritual life has been poisoned by supersitition and hatred for the Jewish people. But I must explicitly caution you about the introduction, which downgrades the certainty of religion to an assumption. This is the tendency of the European enlightenment, but it is not the living conviction that should be conveyed by the Jewish people to a nation that is being stirred to revival. "Praise the Lord, all you nations, extol Him all you people, for mighty has been His mercy toward us. His faith will endure forever. Praise the Lord" (Psalm 117).

May God be with you, and may your hands be strengthened to hallow the name of the God of Israel and the name of His people that is dedicated to Him.

Igrot, Vol. II, letter 669.

Buber and Ebner: Intellectual Cross-Fertilization Between a Catholic and a Jew

RIVKA HORWITZ

OF ALL THE WORKS WRITTEN BY MARTIN Buber in his long and varied life, perhaps none is so closely identified with his name as the short, poetic *I and Thou* (1923), in which young people of several generations have found their own yearnings expressed. The foundation of this work was the important philosophic discovery that in the beginning is relation, rather than man in isolation.

To understand Buber's philosophy of "I-Thou," "I-It," and "Eternal Thou," one should, I think, see him in relation to some of his contemporaries who were struggling to express the priority of relation, and who were, in some instances, even his predecessors, although their efforts in this direction were much less widely known. This paper will concentrate on one figure in particular: an obscure Austrian thinker named Ferdinand Ebner (1881–1931), whose major work, *Das Wort und die Geistigen Realitäten* (The Word and the Spiritual Realities) had appeared in print before Buber began writing *I and Thou*.

In my book, *Buber's Way to I and Thou* (1978), I put forth the thesis that certain basic thoughts of Ebner were known to Buber and may have helped him in crystallizing his dialogical thinking. Here I would like to introduce more historical data on the connections between Ebner and Buber's circle, and to show Buber's originality in the light of this knowledge.

Ferdinand Ebner came from a background much less fortunate than that of Martin Buber who, after the early trauma of his parents' separation, was raised by wealthy and devoted grandparents, enjoyed a university education, and found early recognition as a writer and thinker. Ebner was the seventh child of an impoverished Austrian Catholic family; his father, at the time of the boy's birth, was sixty-two years old. He experienced no carefree and joyous youth; his education ended in a teachers' seminary; he never studied at a university to develop his interests, which ranged from mathematics and physical sciences to art, music, and literature. He earned his living as an elementary school teacher in the village of

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Gablitz, not far from Vienna. While, at times, he enjoyed this occupation, at other times he felt it to be a heavy burden. Throughout his life he had periods of severe depression. He was suspicious of the world, pessimistic, and lonely, although late in life he married and became the father of a son. From 1902 on he suffered from tuberculosis, of which he finally died in 1931 at the age of fifty.

Despite his sufferings, however, he was loved and revered by a small circle of intellectuals who were deeply impressed with his talents and his spiritual qualities, as manifested both in his life and in his work. One of these friends, Ludwig von Ficker, was anxious to publish *The Word and the Spiritual Realities*, but, because of the postwar economic depression, did not have the funds to print the entire book immediately. He therefore first published five of the eighteen "Fragments," of which the work consists, in the quarterly which he edited, *Der Brenner*, in 1920. The complete work was printed in September, 1921.

Ebner's basic message, in *The Word and the Spiritual Realities*, is that man cannot be conceived of as an isolated "I." This is the mistake of idealism in particular and of philosophy in general. Rather, spirituality is always something mutual; the "I" first becomes aware of itself as dependent on a "Thou." The primary relation is that of love and, specifically, the love of God for man. Man truly lives only in the face of God, and this relation is the basic I and Thou. Man's great sin is to shut himself off from the "Thou" and try to exist in isolation. In so doing he magnifies the world of objects and preoccupies himself with them. God cannot be found in objects; he cannot be found outside the I-Thou relation, nor conceived of in the third person. About "His" existence outside this relation, "His" relation to the rest of the creation, we cannot, according to Ebner, know anything whatever. These ideas are expressed in aphoristic form, with many flashes and innumerable repetitions, but the main ideas are clear and return in various ways upon themselves. It would certainly have been possible for a gifted thinker like Martin Buber to glean the essence of Ebner's philosophy from the five chapters which were published in *Der Brenner*, and which came to his attention in 1920.

In an article published in 1954, "On the History of the Dialogical Principle," Buber claims that, in writing *I and Thou*, he was not influenced by Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, or Ferdinand Ebner. But, later on in the same essay, he says: "As I wrote the third and last part, I broke the reading ascesis and began with Ebner's fragments . . ."¹ And in a note to these words he adds: "First I happened to see some of them that were published in an issue of *Brenner* and then sent for the book." And he comments:

(Ebner's) book showed me, as no other since then, here and there in an

1. Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (New York, 1967), p. 215.

almost uncanny nearness, that in this our time men of different kinds and traditions have devoted themselves to the search for the buried treasure.

So far, scholars aware of the similarities between Buber and Ebner have not been willing to draw the conclusion that the actual molding of *I and Thou* had something to do with Ebner. They have tended, rather, to accept Buber's implication that these similarities were the result of independent discoveries, without direct influence. Thus, the Swiss theologian Emil Brunner, who was a friend of both Buber and Ebner, wrote:

Buber's simple yet ingenious discovery of the great difference between the I-Thou relationship and that of the I-It relation constitutes indeed — as Karl Heim seems first to have pointed out — a "Copernican revolution" in the thinking not only of Europe but of the whole of mankind. In point of actual fact this qualification was applicable not so much to Martin Buber as to an at that time unknown Austrian thinker, Ferdinand Ebner, who in his book, *Das Wort und die geistigen Realitäten* (The Word and the Spiritual Realities) had published the identical discovery a year before, without either one knowing of the others.²

The editor of Ebner's *Schriften*, Franz Seyr, wrote in a similar vein in 1963:

From the added Epilogue to Martin Buber's book on "The Dialogical Principle" (Heidelberg, 1954) can be deduced, that he knew of the "Pneumatological Fragments" very soon; their study was, however, delayed until after he had finished writing *I and Thou* (Leipzig, 1923).³

It is fair to recall that attempts at an "I-Thou" philosophy do appear in Buber's work prior to his contact with Ebner. Some of the terminology of the book *I and Thou* is anticipated in his speeches, "The Holy Way" (1918) and "Herut" (1919), and even in earlier works. In 1918, Buber jotted down an outline in which he spoke of God as the Confronted and, like Ebner, described the relation to God in terms of love.⁴ A number of letters from 1919–21 speak of his working on the Prolegomena — the early title for *I and Thou*. Only the discovery of more early manuscripts of *I and Thou* might help us to ascertain how much of its thought was worked out prior to the acquaintance with Ebner's work. But that this acquaintance antedated 1922 is at least suggested by the conflict within Buber's own account, as well as by other evidence.

Among these is a letter from Franz Rosenzweig to Rudolph Hallo, describing a visit which he had paid to Buber in December, 1921, for the purpose of getting acquainted with the great sage and learning about Hasidism from him. At this meeting Buber, upon Rosenzweig's request, gave a demonstration of his way of teaching a Hasidic text. Rosenzweig reported that Buber emphasized "both the importance and the reality of the word, which was not entirely unfamiliar to me."⁵ (Rosenzweig seems

2. Emil Brunner, "Judaism and Christianity in Buber," in Schilpp and Friedman, *The Philosophy of Martin Buber* (La Salle, Illinois, 1967), p. 309.

3. Franz Seyr, ed., F. Ebner, *Schriften* (München, 1963), vol. I, p. 1077.

4. Rivka Horwitz, *Buber's Way to I and Thou* (Heidelberg, 1978), p. 159.

5. Franz Rosenzweig, *Briefe* (Berlin, 1935), p. 466.

to have in mind here his own philosophy as expressed in *The Star of Redemption* (1921), which has as its center the I-Thou of God and man. Buber, at the time of the visit, had not yet read the *Star*, but the growing friendship between the two thinkers is also part of the context in which *I and Thou* developed.) The words "importance" and "reality of the word" (*Realität des Wortes*), with which Rosenzweig summarizes Buber's teaching on that occasion, recall Ebner's terminology and suggest that Ebner was known at that time in Rosenzweig's and Buber's intellectual circle.

Such was indeed the case; Rosenzweig's cousin and friend, Hans Ehrenberg, a Jew who had converted to Christianity, had met Ebner in the fall of 1921 and had subsequently written two reviews of Ebner's book. At Ehrenberg's suggestion, Rosenzweig had sent Ebner a copy of the *Star*. Ehrenberg, with whom Rosenzweig had discussed the ideas of the *Star* in its developing stages, and who agreed with some of these ideas (though from a Christian point of view), was deeply impressed with the similarities between Rosenzweig and Ebner — "a spiritually historic coincidence," as Ehrenberg rightly called it in a letter to Ludwig von Ficker. That the similarities were coincidental is, in this case, beyond doubt; both books were written toward the end of the first World War, and both appeared in 1921 — Rosenzweig's in March and Ebner's in September. The coincidence testifies to a common frame of mind among the thinkers of that generation. It was characterized by a revolt against idealism and a return to the Bible; it also contained tendencies which later crystallized in existentialism. It is noteworthy that in the same period Gabriel Marcel, without knowing of either Rosenzweig or Ebner, wrote in his *Metaphysical Journal* such sentences as: "God is reality in that reality absolutely cannot be treated as a *he* or an *it*."⁶

One outcome of Rosenzweig's visit to Buber in December, 1921, was a series of eight lectures given by the latter at the Freie Jüdische Lehrhaus, of which the former was then director. Of these lectures, entitled *Religion als Gegenwart* (Religion as Presence), a good stenographic transcription has been preserved; they were published for the first time in *Buber's Way to I and Thou*.⁷ In them Buber was thinking aloud, developing the ideas which later took shape in *I and Thou*. In the lectures, these ideas sometimes appear closer to Ebner than in the forms which they assumed in *I and Thou*. For instance, when, in the Fifth Lecture, Buber speaks of the world of "It" as a "Fall" or a "betrayal," absolutely opposed to the world of "Thou," he is close to a dualism which underlies Ebner's philosophy, but at variance with his own basically affirmative attitude toward the world. The similarities between the lectures and the "Fragments" extend to idiosyncrasies of language and thought, such as the application of the term

6. Gabriel Marcel, *Metaphysical Journal* (Chicago, 1952), p. 156.

7. *Buber's Way to I and Thou*, pp. 47–152.

“anthropomorphic” to any designation of God by a third person pronoun.

Moreover, in the lecture given on March 5, 1922, Buber relates an anecdote which is retold many years later, in the *Autobiographical Fragments* (1965), with a significant change which may reflect anxiety about the time when certain insights came to him. In the lecture Buber tells how he was visited in 1914 by William Hechler, a Christian clergyman who favored Zionism. On taking leave, Hechler asked him point blank: “Do you believe in God?” Buber found no satisfactory answer at the time; only years later, in the fall of 1921, while riding in a train, did the answer come to him:

If belief in God means the possibility of thinking about Him in the third person, then I am not sure that I believe in God, or at least, I do not know if it is permissible for me to say that I believe in God.⁸

Thus, the “answer” would seem to have come to him after the beginning of his acquaintance with Ebner’s work. In the version given in the “Autobiographical Fragments,” Buber meditates on Hechler’s question immediately after the latter’s departure, and the answer comes to him then, in 1914, after some minutes’ concentration. Obviously the earlier account is the more trustworthy, and that Buber evidently felt it necessary to advance the date of his “revelation” is also significant.

Of course, the differences between Buber and Ebner are also visible, both in *Religion as Presence* and in *I and Thou*. Far more than Ebner, Buber emphasizes and develops the idea that the I-Thou relation is possible not only with God, but with other humans and even with nature, as in the famous passage on the tree in *I and Thou*. For Buber, the stress is not so much on the world’s falling-away from an original Thou-relation, as on life as a *search* for the “ultimate Thou.” Moreover, a human collective based on the I-Thou relation to God — a “we,” a company of believers — is conceivable for Buber, though apparently not for Ebner. Ebner’s influence may still be visible in *I and Thou* in such sentences as “In the beginning is relation.” Here is an easily recognizable variant of the first sentence of the Gospel of John, “In the beginning was the Word,” to which Ebner constantly refers, interpreting it as a statement that love, or the I-Thou relation, is primary. Of course, the Christian implication of the sentence — that Jesus is the personification of the personal God — was never accepted by Buber. Nor does Buber absolutize the word itself in the way that Ebner does in the sentence “‘God created man’ means simply that he spoke to him.”

In late summer, 1922, Franz Rosenzweig received the galleys of the first part of *I and Thou* and responded with a long, undated letter in which he reproaches Buber for

this focusing on the I-Thou — which, by the way, you share with Ebner . . .

8. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

You, like Ebner, intoxicated with the joy of discovery, throw all the rest (literally) to the dead.⁹

Rosenzweig also compares Buber with the neo-Kantian Hermann Cohen, whose *Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums* (Religion of Reason from the Sources of Judaism) (1919) had likewise developed a theory of "I and Thou." He calls the discovery of the I-Thou by four thinkers — Buber, Ebner, Cohen, and himself — "a real story of 'Four who entered the Pardes'" and argues that his own view, which reinstates the "HE," the God of creation, represents the one who "entered in peace and went out in peace."

Clearly, a familiarity of both thinkers with Ebner's work is implied by these remarks. One may also note that the reinstatement of the "HE" which Rosenzweig recommends does, indeed, take place in Buber's later work, beginning with his collaboration with Rosenzweig on the Bible translation. One can only speculate on the extent to which either of these considerations caused Rosenzweig's brilliant, highly critical letter to be omitted by Buber from his edition of Rosenzweig's correspondence in 1935. (It is published for the first time in English in *Buber's Way to I and Thou*.) Gustav Landauer's blistering letter to Buber of May 12, 1916, which may have helped bring Buber back from militant support of the German war effort to pacifism, has a similar history: omitted by Buber from his posthumous edition of his friend's letters, it was published by Paul Mendes-Flohr in *Von der Mystik zum Dialog* (From Mysticism to Dialogue) (1978). Both incidents reveal a curious paradox in Buber: his very real openness to influence by others, which accords well with his theory of dialogue, and his attempts to cover up that openness, which accord more with conventional notions of "spiritual property."

It is unclear why Buber and Rosenzweig were not interested in corresponding with Ebner; but, then, Ebner, too, at first, was by no means eager to claim spiritual kinship. On January 6, 1922, he wrote to his friend, Luise Karpischek:

On my return last Saturday from Neustadt I found a book that was sent to me by a Zionist philosopher of religion, Franz Rosenzweig of Frankfurt am Main, incidentally without any covering letter. I suppose most likely that this occurred as a result of the reading of my book. This is how I am reminded of my authorship. Of course, I don't even feel like reading the book, not even enough to form an opinion of it. In the end this must have something to do with the enthusiasm of that Prof. Ehrenberg in Heidelberg for my book. A Zionist viewpoint in the understanding of the problems of spiritual life finds itself akin to what I have written . . . How can I think of writing anything in the future.¹⁰

When he did finally come to read the *Star*, however, he appreciated it highly. In an undated article called "*Die Entdeckung des Ich und Du*" (The

9. Ibid., p. 254.

10. Ebner, *Schriften*, vol. III, p. 447.

Discovery of I and Thou) he calls the *Star* “a great work.” In the same article he speaks of the “strange and wonderful coincidence” between his own ideas and Buber’s.

Ebner kept up a sporadic correspondence with Ehrenberg and their letters reveal the friction of temperaments between the energetic professor and the lonely, suspicious village schoolmaster. On July 8, 1922, Ehrenberg wrote to him:

For those who themselves live, if not in regular, at least not in hard-pressed circumstances, it is so difficult to do justice to the life of one who is hard-pressed. Yet — please permit me this — as a reader of your book I would like to express a feeling that inwardly you are still closing yourself off; the truth of which you give such eloquent testimony has not yet fulfilled itself in you yourself; for this reason you are still living in a certain solitude of thought. And because of this you still have, as yet, a bitter relationship to the world in your own thoughts . . . I know that you must have had difficult experiences . . . I do not want to intrude, but your book, the commonality of thought in which we stand, and your letter make me want to stand by you with the one means of help which is still permitted to us — with the word; if only our intuition and our speaking were not both so weak.”¹¹

Ebner felt that Ehrenberg was “a little condescending and didactic.” He was also ruffled by Ehrenberg’s reviewing him along with such a writer as Max Brod, the Jew, and by Ehrenberg’s statement that Ludwig Feuerbach, the atheist, could be considered as Ebner’s predecessor — an affinity of which Ebner was unaware. Yet, in 1926, after a lapse of several years in their correspondence, Ebner wrote to Ehrenberg saying that he had read Feuerbach and acknowledging the similarity. His last letter to Ehrenberg, written in 1927, speaks of his suffering, of which the worst was not yet over.

Probably none of this was conveyed to Rosenzweig, whose decision in 1913 not to convert to Christianity had gradually produced a rift between him and his cousins, Hans and Rudolf Ehrenberg, and his friend, Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy. The others were eager for Rosenzweig’s conversion and disappointed when he remained firm. In the twenties each developed in his own way; the days of intensive correspondence, when a letter by one of the friends would circulate among all the members of the group, were long past. It was Buber, and not the cousins, who paid weekly visits to the paralyzed Rosenzweig after 1922, and the former friends were even farther apart.

Thus, confessional differences had an impact on the philosophers of I and Thou. But above and beyond this separation, a kinship and a unity were felt which led members of each side to participate in ecumenical dialogue. One result of such dialogue was the founding, in 1926, of the quarterly *Die Kreatur*, where Buber’s collaborators were the Catholic Joseph Wittig and the Protestant Viktor von Weizsäcker. It may have been the

11. *Ibid.*, p. 465.

first ecumenical occasion in which a Jew was asked to participate equally. The introduction to the first issue, which was signed by the three editors, said, among other things:

Permission is given in this day of history for speech. To send the greetings from one side to the other . . . There is a going together without a coming together. There is a common influence without a common life. There is a unity of prayer without a unity of worshippers. We are not allowed to project, we can only prepare.

Articles in the journal discussed only what was common to the contributors — thinkers of the monotheistic religions who rejected idealism and tended toward what later came to be defined as existentialism. The differences among them were not raised. Ebner, already seriously ill, was not among the contributors.

For many years Ebner's works remained, as he himself had lived, in shadow. His humble position seems to have made scholars hesitate to suggest that the already famous philosopher Martin Buber might have been indebted to him. Yet Ebner's work has refused to be forgotten. In 1963–65, his *Schriften* were published in three volumes; in 1974, Shmuel Hugo Bergmann, a disciple of Buber's living in Israel, devoted to him a chapter in his Hebrew book, *Dialogical Philosophy from Kierkegaard to Buber*. In 1981, an Ebner conference was held in Gablitz, and an English translation of *Das Wort und die Geistigen Realitäten* is now planned. Thus, Ferdinand Ebner may finally find his rightful place in the history of philosophy and his rich and profound work may reach a wider readership. An added benefit of this recognition will be a renewed understanding of the extent to which the elaboration of the "I-Thou" principle was a task shared by several minds, rather than the result of solitary lucubration in only one.

Thinking In Our Ancestors' Categories

JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI

IMMANUEL OF ROME (CA. 1261–AFTER 1328)

coined the adage: "All that happened to the fathers was an omen for their sons."¹ But Immanuel had already been preceded by several much older authorities who had adopted the same view.² The habit of thinking in biblical categories has its positive aspects. The Jew who celebrates the annual Feast of Passover is not merely paying homage to an abstract ideal of freedom, or commemorating a historical event which occurred in the very distant past. He is actually *re-living* that event, even as he has been told by the ancient Rabbis that "in every single generation one must regard oneself as though one had personally left the land of Egypt."³

Nor is the revelation of the Torah at Mount Sinai allowed to become a mere reminiscence. To the commandment, "Take to heart these words with which I charge you today," in Deuteronomy 6:6, the ancient Rabbis appended the following comment:

They are not to be in your sight like some ancient ordinance to which nobody is paying attention any longer; but they are to be in your sight like a new ordinance, to which everybody is running.⁴

There is beauty and poetry in some of the ways in which twentieth-century Jews attempt to bring the color and the flavor of their biblical and Rabbinic ancestors' religious appurtenances into the quite different setting of a modern and industrial society — from the lighting of the Sabbath candles (electric light bulbs just will not do!) on Friday nights through the erecting and decorating of farmers' booths in the backyard on the Feast of Sukkoth; and from the way in which the Pentateuchal Scroll is still handwritten on parchment through the ritual fringes attached to a four-cornered prayer shawl, which now serves as a substitute for the garment which, in the biblical period, was worn throughout the day. It all makes for a feeling of *semper et ubique*, linking countless generations one to another, and strengthening the unity of a world-wide religious commu-

1. Quoted in Israel Davidson, ed., *Otzar hameshalim wehapithgamim* (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 5717), p. 2.

2. Davidson, *Op. cit.*, pp. 2f., note #40.

3. *Mishnah Pesahim* 10:5.

4. *Siphre ad Deuteronomium*, #33, ed. Finkelstein, p. 59.

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nity which knows of no Pontifex Maximus or any other supreme ecclesiastical authority. For, with the outward observances, there are likewise transmitted the underlying beliefs about God and man, about Creation and Revelation, about sin and atonement, and about morality and justice.

Alas, the thinking (and acting) in biblical and Rabbinic categories has more than its positive aspects. While one of the major thrusts of biblical thought is directed towards the new, the unprecedented, the "new heaven and the new earth" of Isaiah 65:17, the general historiography of the Hebrew Bible is one of an apparently unending repetitive pattern: God is good to the people. The people show themselves unaware of the divine beneficence, and rebel against God and His demands. God punishes them. The people repent. God delivers them out of their troubles. And then, with different names of villains and heroes, the story is repeated again, and again, and again. Punishment more often than not takes the form of abridging or abolishing national independence; deliverance that of national restoration. And the "rod of God's anger" (Isaiah 10:5) as likely as not is a Gentile king and/or a Gentile nation.

Two things follow from that. One is that, given the requisite repentance on the part of the people, "exile" is necessarily followed by "redemption." Seen from the perspective of the Book of Daniel, as elaborated in later Rabbinic literature, Jewish history after the Patriarchal period begins with the "exile" of Egyptian slavery, followed by the "redemption" of the Exodus and the acquisition of the Promised Land. This is followed by the Babylonian Exile and the Restoration under Cyrus. The Book of Esther describes the "Persian Exile" and the "redemption" wrought by Mordecai and Esther. The Seleucid rule in Palestine represents the "Greek Exile," and the victory of the Maccabees represents the "redemption" which terminated it. The "Roman Exile" came next, and the "messianic redemption," which is to bring it to its end, is not yet in sight.⁵

Traditional Judaism expresses its awareness of being in its current "exilic" phase not only in its standard prayers and synagogal poetry, but also in the provisions of religious law and custom. One of the major objections to the introduction of instrumental music into Jewish houses of worship in the nineteenth century, for example, was the consideration that, whatever may have been the case in the biblical past, instrumental music in the synagogue *now* is forbidden — as a sign of mourning for the destroyed Jerusalem Temple which has not yet been rebuilt.

Whatever the origin may have been, and in all likelihood it was a superstitious one, of the custom of breaking a glass at the Jewish wedding ceremony, the official *interpretation* of that custom is that, even at the moment of their highest joy, Jews should mourn the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and the "exilic" condition of the Jews which that

5. Cf. *Midrash Tehillim* 33:6, ed. Buber, p. 129b.

destruction signifies. And there still are some very pious Jews who, when they build and paint a house, will leave a part of one wall unpainted — as a sign of mourning for the destruction of Jerusalem.

In other words, although, in their long history, Jews have encountered adverse conditions enough to remind them of “exile,” their religion, in its traditionalist formulation, did not allow them to forget, even in periods of tranquility, that the current “exile” had not yet been officially terminated by the divinely promised “redemption.” The psychological repercussions of such a world-view may not always have made it easy for Jews to acclimatize themselves to the fullest even in such environments which might otherwise have facilitated the integration of the Jew. This may indeed have been inevitable in times when biblical prophecies about a future Ingathering of the Exiles and their restoration to the Promised Land were understood in a strictly literalist sense, unrelated to the political and demographic conditions in which those prophecies were first uttered or recorded. That at least some of those prophecies may already have been “fulfilled” within the biblical period itself, as indeed suggested by the third-century Palestinian rabbi Hillel (B. *Sanhedrin* 99a), though occasionally resorted to in medieval anti-Christian polemics, was not a view which commended itself any more to later generations than it did to Hillel’s own contemporaries. But all of that was predicated both upon the belief that God Himself would, in a miraculous manner, bring about the Restoration, and upon the political pariah status in which Jews had for so long been kept in various countries of the Diaspora.

Two considerations should modify this traditional perception in modern times. One has to do with the radically changed political position of the Jews in modern democratic countries. As Robert Gordis has pointed out:

To argue that modern Jews in Chicago, U.S.A., or in Manchester, England, are in the same position as were the Jews of medieval Venice or of Frankfort, is to fly in the face of reality. Even a difference in degree, if extensive enough, becomes a difference in kind.⁶

Bemoaning the physical “exile” in prayer and in symbolic acts might, in fact, be tantamount to a defiant ingratitude towards the God who has let our lines fall in pleasant places, and who enables those of us who wish to do so to move to the homeland of our remote ancestors for the price of a one-way ticket to the State of Israel.

The second consideration has to do with the *temporal* dimension of “exile.” “Exile,” even as traditionally understood, did not only refer to the enforced residence of Jews beyond the borders of the Holy Land, but also to the “exile of the *shekhinah*,” i.e., of God Himself, in a pre-messianic, unredeemed world. This latter concept of “exile” has, of course, not lost

6. Robert Gordis, *Judaism for the Modern Age* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1955), p. 113.

any of its meaning in our own days. Quite the contrary. The headlines of each morning's newspaper remind us that this "exile" has not yet been terminated. The question is only whether the traditional Jewish reminders of "exile" remain the most adequate way of expressing our belief that we are living in an unredeemed world, or whether they do not, by inhibiting the full participation of the Jews in the life and the social endeavors of their environment, help to prolong and to perpetuate the very "exilic" conditions which they are meant to call to mind.

The second consequence which followed from thinking in biblical and Rabbinic categories has been the way in which certain stereotypes, arising out of ancient Israel's relations with her non-Israelite neighboring peoples, have gained and retained ground in a number of Jewish circles to this day. It is not, let it be said at once, that any religious Jew has ever denied, or would have been able to deny without becoming untrue to his religion, the Prophetic vision of a united humankind serving the One God, who is the Father of all. But the Prophetic vision was one of "the end of the days." In the meantime, there was little indication that "the nations" were prepared to "beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks" (Isaiah 2:4), or that they stood ready to join the Jews in the service of the One God. The evidence more often than not pointed in the opposite direction. As a minority faith in Antiquity as well as in all subsequent periods, Judaism could not help but be aware of the difference between "them" and "us." Two instances of biblical typology in particular helped shape the later Jewish stereotypes of the non-Jew.

There is, on the one hand, Amalek, the people which attacked the rear of the desert-wandering Israelites, shortly after the Exodus from Egypt (Exodus 17:8-13). The attack was considered to have been particularly heinous because it was directed against the rear, i.e., the old and the children, at a time when Israel was in any case exhausted; and "wiping out the memory of Amalek" became a sacred duty, never to be forgotten (Deuteronomy 25:17-19).

King Saul, who, in a later generation, waged war against the Amalekites, stands accused of not being thorough enough in pursuing this task, because he spared the life of the Amalekite king, Agag; and, in one of the less inspiring (and, as the modernist might say, less inspired) passages of Scripture, we read how the Prophet Samuel completed Saul's unfinished task. He "hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal" (I Samuel 15:2-33).

But some of Agag's progeny must have escaped the massacre. A later story-teller, writing about the predicament of the Jews in the empire of King Ahasuerus, refers to Haman, the sworn enemy of the Jews, as "the Agagite" (Esther 3:1), a cognomen which the Rabbis understood to mean that Haman was a descendant of the Amalekite king in Saul's days, Agag.

In later Rabbinic literature, Amalek even plays the role of a cosmic

evil principle, of some kind of Antichrist. Rabbi Levi taught in the name of Rabbi Hama bar Hanina that, as long as Amalek is around, neither God Himself nor His Kingdom are complete or perfect. Only with the disappearance of Amalek “from under the heavens” would God’s Kingdom be completely established.⁷

Still, the total execration of Amalek is at least somewhat relieved by the Rabbinic notion that some of the descendants of Haman, obviously after their conversion to Judaism, were studying the Torah with the Sages of Israel in Bené Beraq.⁸

It hardly enhanced the reputation of Amalek in Jewish eyes that the Bible, in Genesis 36:12, describes Amalek, the eponymous ancestor of the Amalekites, as a grandson of Esau. For, while Amalek represents a special case, as it were, not particularly adaptable to generalization and to application to other enemies of the Jews, Esau, or to give him his other biblical name, Edom (Genesis 25:30), in time came to mean anything or anybody perceived as inimical to the Jewish interest.

In the biblical period, Israel and Edom were neighboring peoples, and seem to have had the ups and downs in their neighborly relations which are not unusual between individuals and peoples living next to each other. The Patriarchal story in Genesis 25:19–34 describes Jacob (Israel) and Esau (Edom) as brothers, children of one father (Isaac). If anything, the narratives about the sold birthright and the stolen blessing, if read without Rabbinic spectacles, tend to elicit the reader’s sympathy on behalf of Esau rather than of Jacob. The law in Deuteronomy 23:8 states specifically: “You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother!”

But things seem to have deteriorated considerably by the time the Book of Obadiah and Psalm 137 were composed, for, in that Psalm, the Edomites are said to be gleefully seeking the total obliteration of Jerusalem. And by the time Malachi, the last of the canonical Prophets, delivered his message, he could state, without further elaboration, that, although Esau and Jacob are brothers, God loves Jacob but hates Esau (Malachi 1:2–4).

If later Rabbinic literature was able to envisage any peaceful relation between Jacob and Esau at all, it was only in terms of a putative pre-natal agreement between them, which left “this world” to Esau, and the World-to-Come, i.e., the spiritual world, to Jacob.⁹ Far more frequent in Rabbinic literature, however, are those passages in which Israel and Edom remain pitted against each other, and in which “Edom” is the easily deciphered code name for the Roman Empire — first pagan Rome, then Christian Rome, and finally the Christian world as such. It was in this

7. *Midrash Tanhuma*, *Ki Thetze* 18, ed. Buber, p. 23a.

8. *B. Gittin* 57b; *B. Sanhedrin* 96b.

9. *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta*, ch. 19, ed. Friedmann, Supplement, p. 26.

sense, too, that the name of Edom continued to be used in the poetry of the Synagogue.¹⁰

The image stuck. Whatever was perceived as antithetical to Jewish spirituality was credited to the account of "Edom." Typical is the little ditty, penned by the poet laureate of the modern Zionist movement, Hayyim Nahman Bialik (1873–1934), entitled: "Jacob and Esau," in which Esau is described as rising early in the morning to get drunk at the inn, and coming home late at night to beat up his wife, while Jacob gets up early to go to synagogue, and comes home early to have his heart made glad by his wife and children. Esau, in the refrain, is referred to as "Esau the Gentile."¹¹

It did not *have* to be this way. Rabbinic Judaism was quite capable of rising to a very different evaluation of the Gentiles. It recognized that there were "righteous people among the non-Jewish nations" who were as entitled to their "portion in the World-to-Come" as the Jews were;¹² and it spelled out the seven laws of elementary morality through the observance of which any Gentile could attain unto the status of "a righteous one among the non-Jewish nations."¹³ And there have been individual Rabbis in the Middle Ages who argued that the Christians among whom they were living met all the requirements to be considered "righteous ones among the non-Jewish nations." That view of the Christians was even incorporated into various codes of medieval Jewish Law.¹⁴

If, therefore, in many Jewish circles, the biblical-Rabbinic stereotype of "Edom" prevailed over the equally accessible concept of "the righteous ones among the non-Jewish nations," then at least some of the responsibility for that must undoubtedly be ascribed to the way in which the Jews were treated by the non-Jews with whom they came into actual contact. We know, for example, that they suffered from the contempt which many Greek and Roman classical authors had for them. The notion of an Invisible God, who claimed to be the *only* God at that, did not sit very well with those who were addicted to an enlightened paganism. The observance of the Jewish dietary laws, which made it next to impossible for Jews to accept dinner invitations from their non-Jewish neighbors, brought the Jews the reputation of being xenophobic. And the Jewish insistence upon resting from work every seventh day, without distinction between master

10. Cf. Leopold Zunz, *Die synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters*. Second edition (Frankfurt a.M.: 1920), pp. 453–465.

11. Hayyim Nahman Bialik, *Kol Kithebhé H. N. Bialik* (Tel-Aviv: Dvir, 1938), p. 69.

12. *Tosephta Sanhedrin* 13:2, ed. Zuckerman, p. 434.

13. *Tosephta 'Abhodah Zarah* 8(9):4, ed. Zuckerman, p. 473 and parallels. Cf. Jakob J. Petuchowski, *Melchisedech — Urgestalt der Ökumene* (Freiburg i. Br: Herder, 1979), pp. 27–31.

14. Cf. David Hoffman, *Der Schulchan-Aruch und die Rabbinen*. Second edition (Berlin, 1894), pp. 4–5, 10–11. And see Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance* (New York: Schocken, 1962), pp. 35, 113, 121.

and slave, gained them the ridicule of those societies in which people either always worked or always rested — depending upon whether one belonged to the patricians or to the serfs.¹⁵

Seen from a Jewish perspective, the contempt, the accusation and the ridicule were the typical reactions one would expect of “Edom.” The political and military confrontations between the rebellious province of Judaea and the mighty Roman empire, which led to two disastrous Judaeon defeats in the first two centuries of the Common Era, added a further dimension to the Jewish perception of “Edom.” And when Rome became Christian, the theological hatred which the Church harbored against the Synagogue, and the murderous means employed by the State Church to win the Jews over to faith in the Christian Savior only strengthened the Jewish stereotype of “Edom.”

It is obvious, then, from the data thus far adduced that, while the Jewish stereotype of the non-Jewish world as “Edom” may originally have been based on the habit of thinking in biblical and Rabbinic categories, the actual day-to-day experiences which Jews had with that world did nothing to weaken, and everything to strengthen, that particular habit.

It also follows from this that, in times of peaceful co-existence, the habit was less likely to maintain itself than in ages of persecution. That, indeed, was the case. After Emancipation had been obtained by the Jews of the West, the stereotype tended to disappear completely — in the West, that is, but not in the East, where there had been no Emancipation; and the imprecations against “Edom,” which had found their way into the medieval synagogue, were completely stricken from the liturgies of Reform and Conservative Judaism.

Then came German National Socialism

Many of those who suffered at the hands of the Nazis and managed to survive, as well as many more who merely watched in horror from afar, have had their faith in the non-Jewish world severely shaken. Unless a non-Jew can prove the contrary, they suspect him, at the very least, of harboring some anti-Semitic feelings — and not just the *German* non-Jew, but the non-Jew *per se*. That reaction may be perfectly understandable in human and psychological terms. But it is nonetheless regrettable. Moreover, if it is wrong for non-Jews to have a stereotype of “the Jews,” it is no less wrong for Jews to operate with a stereotype of “the non-Jews.” And it remains wrong even if the stereotype be indebted to biblical and Rabbinic models, and even if that particular kind of attitude be merely a consequence of thinking in biblical and Rabbinic categories. At the very least, it ought to be recognized that such thinking could, on occasion, turn out to be counter-productive, and that it could all too easily become a self-

15. Cf. Max Radin, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1915), *passim*.

fulfilling prophecy. If a (non-anti-Semitic) non-Jew is told often enough that he is an anti-Semite, he may ultimately decide to live up to the expectation which Jews have of him.

The Bible, after all, contains the deposit of faith of many different generations, reflecting the experiences, the lives and the thoughts of people who lived at various times and under a variety of conditions. Fundamentalists, both Jewish and Christian, may insist that the Bible, as the very Word of God, speaks with a unified voice, and that all of its pages teach the identical doctrine. But even Fundamentalists, though they may do so tacitly, pick and choose the particular doctrines they want to emphasize, ignoring the others or attempting to "harmonize" them with the particular doctrines which they have chosen to highlight. That is why there is more than just one Fundamentalist sect in Christianity, and much more than just one kind of Orthodox Judaism.

What Fundamentalists do tacitly, modernists do openly. They will, within the Jewish scheme of things, for example, recognize in the cult of animal sacrifices an institution which may have been appropriate to the biblical period, and yet insist that the institution has been outgrown, and that they have no wish for its ultimate, messianic restoration. They will recognize in the law of "an eye for an eye" (Exodus 21:18–25; Leviticus 24:18–20) a considerable advance over the more rough and primitive forms of justice, in which the victim might have been allowed or even encouraged to avenge himself upon his attacker — not excluding the possibility of actually killing him. "An eye for an eye" establishes the principle that the punishment must fit, not exceed the crime: "An eye for an eye, not a life for an eye!" But recognizing this moral advance, modernists have no scruples in insisting that the Rabbinic interpretation of this law in terms of *monetary compensation*, instead of literal implementation,¹⁶ marks a further advance, even beyond that of the Bible.

It is, one may venture to suggest, not only the right, but also the duty of Jews who do not share the Fundamentalist assumptions to review their biblical and Rabbinic heritage in every generation. Such a review implies choosing those aspects of that heritage which they deem to be God's will for their time and their place, and also relegating to the storage chamber of history all that seems to inhibit the fullest unfolding of the Jewish spirit. Radical as such a procedure may appear to be, it is nevertheless not altogether unprecedented in our Rabbinic past. There is, for example, the Rabbis' inquiry about the kind of punishment which awaits the sinner. Dissatisfied with the answer they found in biblical Wisdom literature, they appealed from Proverbs to the Prophets, from the Prophets to the Pentateuch, and, most daring of all, from the Pentateuch to God Himself.¹⁷ Clearly, they recognized that the ancestral religious heritage was so

16. B. *Baba Qamma* 83b–84b.

17. P. *Makkoth* II,6, ed. Krotoshin, p. 31d; cf. *Yalqut Shime'oni*, Psalms, #702.

rich and so variegated that it became impossible to affirm, at one and the same time, all of its different components.

When we review our heritage today, we may well come to the conclusion that, though, at first, it might have been understood as a blessing, the concept of the ancestors' having set the pattern of our own fate can also be a very baneful and inhibiting constraint upon the descendants. Those descendants, living in the largest, freest and wealthiest Jewish community which Jewish history has ever recorded may find themselves condemned to relate to their supposedly "exilic" surroundings with undue suspicions and self-fulfilling apprehensions. We may also have to admit that stereotypes, even of the biblical and Rabbinic kind, can be a very dangerous and unhealthy thing. They certainly do not encourage the "descendants of the wicked Haman" to study Torah in Bené Beraq, nor do they induce "Edom" to aspire to the status of being righteous among the nations of the world. Yet without the prospect of their doing so, there is very little hope left for the Jews themselves.

The Messianic Ideal and the Apocalyptic Vision

JACOB B. AGUS

CENTRAL TO THE JEWISH MENTALITY IS THE vision of a messianic future. At various times, Jewish people were challenged by friends and foes alike to justify their existence. If others did not ask them, Jews asked themselves such questions as the following — why remain “a people that dwells alone”? why hold on to a destiny and a way of life that draw the enmity of the nations? Since “God is good to all,” why bear the heavy burden of election?

Many replies were given by prophets and sages, but the clinching argument was always the Messianic Age, when the special role of Israel among the nations will be vindicated. Ezekiel warned the elders of Israel that the Lord will rule over them “with outpoured wrath,” even against their will, but then he proceeded to speak of the resurrection of “the dry bones.” The messianic vision is presented in different ways by the prophets from Amos to Malachi, by Philo and the sages of Mishnah and Talmud, by the apocalyptic writers from Daniel to IV Esras.

In popular Judaism, the messianic hope was even more central. This is attested by the many *midrashim* of redemption and by the many uprisings in our history, particularly the three mighty rebellions against Rome of 65-70, 111-117 and 131-135 C.E. In the hymn read on Shavuot, *Akdamot*, Israel is described as a wondrous beauty wooed by the nations and urged to join them. In reply, Israel resists all blandishments and points to its faith that the Messiah will come and along with him the resurrection of the dead. As we shall see, even the great movements of modern times — Hasidism and the Enlightenment, Socialism in its several forms and the convergent streams of Zionism — should be viewed as versions of messianism. In our own day, our brothers walked to the gas-chambers singing of their faith in the coming of the Messiah — *Ani maamin beviat hamoshiah*. The state of Israel is described in the official prayer, composed by the Chief Rabbis, as “the beginning of the flowering of our redemption.” More technically, it is designated as *at-halta de ge-ulah*, the beginning of redemption.

Since messianism reflects the most powerful motivations of Jewish life, it is essential that we take account of the psychic roots of this belief.

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Gershon Scholem pointed out that messianism combined two opposing motivations — a restorative hope, affirming the return of Israel to its status in the days of Kings David and Solomon, and a utopian vision of a trans-historical future. In this essay, we shall employ a modified version of Scholem's distinction, one that is more suited to an analysis of the choices confronting our people in our time. We draw the line between the Messianic Ideal and the Apocalyptic Vision of the future. The former is a projection of the moral-rational faith of the prophets; the latter is a dream-like affirmation of myth and mystery that afford gratification to the distressed and the persecuted. The two versions of messianism derive respectively from two fundamentally different patterns of faith.

The messianic ideal was an extension of the hopeful world-view of the *Tanakh*: Life is good and getting better. "And the Lord saw all that He had done, and behold it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). For the Creator of the world had blessed mankind and assigned to them the task of guarding the earth and settling it. When Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, God showed them how to make fire (*Pesahim* 54a). This belief was probably asserted in conscious opposition to the myth of Prometheus, who was punished by the Gods for the same deed. At creation, "the name of the Messiah" was already present — that is, the process of progressive spiritual growth was built into the basic structure of the cosmos. So, "the favors and wonders of everyday life" attest to the goodness and compassion of the Creator of the universe. To be sure, the world is not perfect, but it is perfectible. It is indeed man's role to become "a partner of the Lord in the work of creation" (*Shabbat* 10a) and to hasten the coming of this Messiah (*Sanhedrin* 98a). So, the messianic era grows out of "this world" through the help of God, which is manifested everywhere. Evil is not a cosmic force, frustrating the intentions of the Supreme Being, but part of the divine plan to create higher levels of goodness. The Midrash speaks of evil and even death being "very good" (*Midrash Rabba*, 9, 10). Our mortality brings home to us the fact that every moment of our existence is uniquely precious. In brief, messianic redemption is built into the course of history; it is more of the same marks of divine goodness and justice that we find in nature and in human nature (*Shabbat* 30b, Rabban Gamaliel's description of the messianic era).

The apocalyptic vision of a new order of creation reflects an opposite pattern in religion. Its faith is a repudiation of the glories of "this world." "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked" (Job 9:24). God is "hidden" in "this world" (Isaiah 45:15). Prophets and Psalmists pray God to emerge from His hiding place (Isaiah 8:17; 53:3, Psalms 13:2; 44:25; 88:15). The visions of the apocalyptic masters deal with the trans-historical and the supernatural, for they have despaired of "this world" and all its ways. "All nations are as nought in His sight" (Isaiah 40:17). Life on earth is a vale of tears, bedeviled by privation, disease and death. Satan is a cosmic force of malice and cunning. Hence, all ideals are certain to fail.

The wicked are likely to triumph in “this world” and the righteous are doomed to suffer. A succession of world-empires will not rescue mankind from its relentless slide to chaos. However, at a time known only to God, a totally new order of existence will be born, which will be free of the many evils of “this world.” Everything will be miraculously transformed, and the dead will come to life. In the World to Come, “there will be no eating, no drinking, no sexual relations” (*Berakhot* 17a), only pure spirituality, and the saints will live like angels, in the company of God (*Taanit* 31a). In brief, the apocalyptic visionaries articulated the defiant faith in God’s triumph that is asserted *in spite of* all the failures and frustrations of life. This faith is non-rational, non-moral, strictly fideistic and exclusive.

The messianic ideal and the apocalyptic vision derive from opposing moods and judgments concerning the nature and destiny of human life; yet, their symbols and metaphors are intermingled. The robust optimism and moral fervor of the prophets are found in our scriptures and sacred writings next to passages reflecting the radical pessimism of the unknown visionaries. For traditions are transmitted more through symbols than through abstract ideas and vague sentiments. Also, great and daring visionaries experience variations of mood, even as ordinary mortals do. According to the Midrash, Moses, the arch-prophet, could not prophecy for thirty-eight years in the wilderness because, in spite of his firm faith, he was deeply distressed by the “stiff-neckedness” of his people. (This comment is discussed by Maimonides in his *Guide*, II, 36.)

In order to separate the healthy seeds of messianism from their apocalyptic counterparts, we have to become sensitive to their many variations in our long history. Since, in our contemporary consciousness, the messianic age is already in the air, as it were, we have to learn to identify the several components of the messianic hope and clearly distinguish them from their apocalyptic counterparts. The dark demons of mythology, when they function unobserved, are most effective in distorting our perceptions.

For a long time, the “Day of the Lord” and “the end of days” dominated the metaphorical structure of “the hope of Israel.” These symbols are compatible with some of the prophetic and apocalyptic moods, though not with the moral-rational dimension of prophecy and wisdom. They represent the time when the Justice of the Lord will become manifest. Apparently, the people looked forward to a predetermined day, complacent about their own righteousness, and eager to share in the wondrous glories that the Lord has hidden for the just. Because God is just, the wicked individuals and nations will be punished; because He is compassionate, He will crush all the demonic forces which are troubling mankind; because He is perfect, He will create a new order of nature that will be fully responsive to human needs and hopes, “a new heaven and a new earth” (Isaiah 65:17).

The prophets focused attention on the moral-rational aspect of the

popular hope. Amos warned that the justice demanded by God is most exacting. Hosea stressed God's boundless love and the call to repentance. Isaiah expressed the many-splendored messianic ideal of peace and moral perfection in metaphors that have not been excelled. Jeremiah spoke of the "new heart" that the Lord will give and of a new covenant to be written on the hearts of people (Jeremiah 3:31; Ezekiel 36:26).

In general, the messianic ideal of the classical prophets is three-dimensional — national, universal, cosmic. In the first dimension, the vindication of Israel's destiny is foretold. Its history will be seen as the key to the education of mankind. Many nations will "walk by its light," they will journey toward "the mountain of the house of the Lord." "For out of Zion shall go forth the Law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Nations will give up the worship of idols, acknowledge their errors and accept the living core, at least, of the monotheistic faith of Israel (Jeremiah 16:19).

In the second, the universal dimension, which is implied in the vindication of Israel, all mankind will be saved. Furthermore, the Lord will then elect other nations, in addition to Israel — namely, Egypt and Assyria (Isaiah 19:24). The chief phenomenon in this dimension will be the abolition of war, the breaking of swords into plowshares and the establishment of a reign of peace.

In the third, the goodness of God will be manifested in the cosmic dimension. Both physical nature and human nature will be transformed (Jeremiah 31:30-33). As to agriculture, the curse of Adam will be lifted, and crops will ripen almost as soon as they are sown. As Amos puts it, "A time is coming, declares the Lord, when the plowman shall meet the reaper, and the treader of grapes, him who holds (the bag of) seeds; when the mountain shall drip wine and all the hills shall wave with grain" (Amos 9:13).

The visions of the pre-exilic prophets were reformulated in telling imagery by Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah. The truth of Israel's mission will be acknowledged by Kings and people (Isaiah 49:14-21; 52:13-15; 53:1-12). The figure of the Suffering Servant is presented either as Messiah or as the people Israel. Individuals from distant lands will be welcomed into the fellowship of Israel, not merely into a caste of tolerated aliens (Isaiah 56:3-8). Apocalyptic elements are apparent in the later prophets as, for example, in Zechariah's description of the final wars of the Lord against the nations and His punishment of those that do not come up to celebrate *Sukkot* in Jerusalem (Zechariah 14). In the prophet's metaphors, all earthly developments are foreshadowed by events transpiring in an angelic sphere. Satan makes his appearance as the prosecuting angel in the heavenly court (Zechariah 3:2). Zephaniah describes the "Day of the Lord" in the gloomiest, most frightening colors, and Malachi adds to the drama of redemption the figure of Elijah the Prophet, whose task it will be to prepare Israel for the awesome day of judgment (Zephaniah 1:12-18; Malachi 2:23).

The book of Daniel, which was not placed among the prophetic books in the Hebrew canon but was classed as a part of the Writings, provided myths and metaphors which were used by the apocalyptic visionaries. The End will occur at a certain, specific time, concealed in riddles which later mystics have tried to solve. The "Son of Man" is presented both as a heavenly being and as a representative of the community of saints to whom unbounded dominion will be given at the "end of days." In Daniel's vision, all earthly wars are prefigured by heavenly happenings, in which "the princes" of the several nations fight one another. The resurrection of the dead is affirmed, so that martyrs for the truth faith may be certain to receive their reward. A similar statement was inserted into the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 26:19).

In the Maccabean period, the resurrection of the dead became an article of faith, one of the issues dividing the Saducees from the Pharisees. In the Talmud, the test of the faithful is their acceptance of the belief that "resurrection of the dead is implied in the Torah" (Sanhedrin 90a). It is immaterial whether one or another verse is made to convey this dogma so long as Torah-itic origin is affirmed. This strange formulation is understandable in its historical context, since the Pharises claimed that the Oral Law was contained in the Written Law.

The relationship of the Apocalyptic visionaries to the Pharisaic sages and later the teachers of Mishnah and Talmud is disputed. The books of IV Esdras, Baruch, Enoch and Jubilees were individual works, even though their authors may have been recognized scholars. Professor George Foot Moore was right in his contention that those and similar works do not, by themselves, reflect accurately the spectrum of opinion in "normative" Judaism. In the first century of the common era, there flourished an abundance of contending schools of thought. Essenic groups like the Qumranites and the Therapeutae were sectarian in self-definition — they alone were true Israel. The Pharisaic party was broadly based, a religious community rather than a sect. Still, the association of the resurrection with the messianic era remained one of the issues which drew the line between normal growth in history and supernatural intervention inaugurating a new era of existence. The Pharisees accepted the doctrine of the resurrection, but the center of gravity in their world-view was the task of improving this world, in keeping with the ideals of Torah. In II Maccabees (7:7, 9) the brother-martyrs cite the resurrection as the reason for their martyrdom — "but the King of the world shall raise us up, who have died for His laws, and revive us to life everlasting." Rabbi Akiba, at his martyrdom, did not refer to the resurrection; instead he cited the obligation to fulfill the supreme command of the Almighty — "to love the Lord with all one's heart, all one's soul and all one's might (*Berakhot* 61b.)

We encounter in the Talmud and Midrashim myths and metaphors which bear the imprint of both prophetic idealism and apocalyptic mystery. Such are the references to a messianic meal, to be prepared by the

Lord Himself, consisting of the meat of a legendary ox, *behemot*, and the flesh of a mythical fish, *leviathan*, sweetened “by wine which was stored in its grapes since the six days of creation” (*Baba Bathra* 75a). There is also the messianic dance, in which the Lord will be the choreographer and the saints will do the dancing (*Taanit* 31a). Then, too, there will be the messianic Torah-session, when a “new Torah” (*Tanna d. Eliyahn Zutta*) or a “renewed Torah,” will be conveyed in all its purity — “the righteous sit with crowns on their heads enjoying the delight of the radiance of the *Shekhinah*” (*Berakhot* 17a).

The ambivalence of the *tannaim* to the messianic ideal is illustrated in the teaching of Rabbi Akiba, who plunged toward the supernatural extreme when he interpreted a passage in Daniel to mean that “the Messiah will sit on the right hand of God” at the Day of Judgment. He was duly rebuked by the Sages for blurring the boundary between the *Shekhinah* and the secular world (*Hagigah* 14a, *Sanhedrin* 38b). When he asserted the opposite view, that the Messiah was a battlefield hero and declared that Simon of Kosiba, known as Bar Kokhba, is the awaited redeemer, some of the Sages again rebuked him (J.T. *Taanit* 4,3). The Sages maintained the tension between the two aspects of the messianic hope. Of special interest is a talmudic passage, which tells of a discussion concerning the name of the Messiah. The disciples of Yannai said that Yannai would be his name; the disciples of Yohanan said that Yohanan would be his name (*Sanhedrin* 98a). Each disciple named his favorite teacher. The point of that discussion is that every person should see the Messiah as the representative of the best qualities that he encounters in life. Perfection cannot be described, only indicated by reference to the best persons we know.

Still, the Talmud retains the three dimensions of the messianic ideal — Israel will be triumphant, all-conquering; “when the Messiah comes, all will be slaves to Israel” (*Eruvin* 43b). In another passage we are told that, in time to come, the Gentiles will either die in battle or convert to Judaism sincerely, or accept the Jewish faith in a flawed, half-hearted manner, (*Avodah Zarah* 3b) and that the order of nature will be replaced by a more benign set of laws. On the other hand, Samuel taught that “the only difference between the days of the Messiah and this world is the ending of governmental oppression” (*Berakhot* 34b).

The tension between the prophetic and apocalyptic patterns of faith was demonstrated in the emergence of the belief in two messiahs. Following the disaster of the Bar Kokhba rebellion (131-135 C.E.), people came to believe that the Messiah, son of Joseph, would seek to redeem the Jewish people by means of war. Initially, he would enjoy great success, but, eventually, he would be defeated and die on the battlefield. Then the spiritual Messiah, the son of David, would come and inaugurate a new era.¹

1. *Sukkah* 52a; *Beth Hamidrash*, ed. Jellinek, II, 54-63 and VI, 117-121; *Nistarot di R. Shimeon b. Yohai*.

The two Messiahs symbolize respectively the two patterns of faith and the corresponding hopes for redemption.

The messianic hope remained a blend of hope and despair throughout the medieval and early modern periods. Rationalists stressed the hope of spiritual growth; mystics put their faith in the metamorphosis that God would carry out at a time known only to Himself. The former imagined that the Jewish people would be the teachers of mankind in the messianic era; the latter, that the Israelites would become the princes and rulers of mankind.² Maimonides, who insisted that the messianic age would emerge out of the normal course of historic events, was the authority for the rationalists. Nahmanides, who declared that the resurrection would mark the beginning of the messianic age, afforded credibility to the mystics. The Maharal of Prague echoed the sentiments of most people when he proposed a synthesis of both positions:

Even the one who said that in the days of the Messiah nothing will be changed, except Israel's subjection to foreign governments, did not really mean to teach that only the political situation of Israel will be changed, for such a thought must not be uttered. But, he implied that the cosmos will then no longer be subjected to material forces, as it is today — the Evil Desire will be transmuted, all men and women will be impelled to serve the Creator and Him alone . . . all will be saints.³

Scholem called attention to the profound psychical forces that were released by the pseudo-messianic movements of Sabbatai Zevi and Jacob Frank. Before the Age of Enlightenment, Jewish mass-movements were inevitably pseudo-messianic, seeking miraculous release from the horrors of this cruel world. The Hasidic movement succeeded in giving fresh orientation and motivation to Jewish life, without breaking with the momentum of tradition.

Hasidism was deeply messianic in the supernatural, apocalyptic sense, but it also cultivated the healthy seed of progressive messianism. Even the "average person" (*bainoni*) can hasten the advent of the Messiah. The *Zaddikim* are messianic figures, in whom the Evil Desire has already been overcome and metamorphosed. They do entertain "strange thoughts" (*maḥshavot zarot*) but those unholy sentiments are generated by their followers, who have surrendered their own personalities to the guidance of their masters. The common people strengthen the efforts of their holy leaders to transmute the forces of evil into agents of goodness. The *Zaddikim* are able to carry out their theurgic tasks because they are aided by the Holy Spirit (*Ruah haKodesh*) and by the total faith of their followers (*hitkashrut*).

The Hasidic movement was launched by its great founder, R. Israel Baal Shem, when, in a letter to his brother-in-law, he proclaimed that he had had two interviews with the soul of the Messiah in heaven and that the

2. See the comments of Rashi and Seforno on Exodus 19:6.

3. *Nezah Yisroel* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook), chap. 50.

latter instructed him how to hasten the time of deliverance by means of mystical unifications (*Yihudim*). As the teaching of the Baal Shem would permeate the entire Jewish world, the inner structure of the cosmos would be metamorphosed and the Messiah would come. During the Napoleonic wars, the Rebbes of Lublin, Rimanof and Pszyshe planned a joint mystical effort to give those fateful battles the character of "the wars of God and Magog" in order to hasten the coming of the Messiah. In 1848, messianic expectations attained so feverish a pitch that it became necessary for the Rabbi of Warsaw to make a public announcement that the Messiah would *not* come in that year.

Yet, the Hasidim stopped short of giving rise to a pseudo-messianic movement. Nurtured in the mystical-apocalyptic trend of Jewish piety, they soon reverted to a passive expectancy of redemption. The founding master was not allowed by heavenly forces to travel to the Holy Land, nor was the founder of Habad-Hasidism allowed to leave the Diaspora. Some hundreds did follow Rabbi Mendel of Vitebsk and Rabbi Abraham of Kalish to Tiberias, but a mass-emigration was discouraged. After all, the Talmud refers to an oath administered to the Jewish people by God, that they must not arise "like a wall" to attempt the conquest of the Holy Land by force (*Ketubot*, 111a). In general, the Hasidic movement wrapped itself in a cocoon of myths, waiting patiently for a supernatural intervention, vigorously combatting invasions of secularity into the charmed circles of their conventicles.

In the contemporary Orthodox world, messianic stirrings are beginning to appear, but only sporadically. The so called *Gush Emunim* is drawn from a variety of Orthodox groups. On the one hand, the secular life and government of Israel can hardly qualify in their eyes as the hoped-for messianic state. On the other hand, the ingathering of exiles and the upbuilding of modern Israel evoke messianic imagery. Decisive for the future of the Orthodox community and the state of Israel is the kind of messianic enthusiasm that is now being stored in the hearts and minds of their followers. Will it be the supernatural, apocalyptic messianism that anticipates a global Armageddon to be followed by a new era? Or will it be the moral-rational messianic ideal of universal peace and progress? Will there be a revival of Israel-centered mythology or a renewal of religious humanism? The first mindset despairs of winning over non-Orthodox Jews, let alone neighbors and foes. It nurses the embers of fanatical self-glorification, of isolation from those who do not belong to their camps, of hatred and fear. The second mindset is open to new developments, rational and progressive, able and willing to cooperate with secular Jews and eager to win over former enemies in a spirit of conciliation.

Messianism is no longer an esoteric subject, to be approached with the absence of personal involvement as a matter of antiquarian interest. The messianic mood is here and gathering strength, even while the messiah tarries. The Lubavicher Rebbe, in his message printed in the Yiddish

weekly, *Der Allgemeiner Journal*, spells out the details of the inauguration of the messianic era through a series of wars of conquest. He applies to the P.L.O. the verse of Numbers 33:55, which threatened the Israelites with dire consequences if they do not annihilate the Canaanites.⁴

The Orthodox community, Hasidic or not, is not the only group which is caught in the field of tension between apocalyptic fantasies and progressive messianism. Secular Jews — liberal, socialistic, or nationalistic — have also brought a messianic fervor to their respective ideological commitments. Jewish people flocked to these several ideologies in the past two centuries with a special enthusiasm and commitment. If they were liberal, then they embraced their ideology with heart entire as a redeeming faith, a secular version of the messianic ideal; if they turned to the socialist program, it was with a special passion that acclaimed it as the one and only salvation of mankind. And those who embraced Jewish nationalism dared to dream of total redemption in a “born again” state of innocence. Messianism is the residual force in the Jewish tradition that is intellectually weakest and emotionally strongest. It is the fire on the altar that must not be extinguished, but it is many-faceted. We recall that the rock of the Holy of Holies was also the cork that stopped the mouth of hell.⁵

Throughout the nineteenth century, modern Jews were inspired by an updated version of prophetic idealism. They responded with fervor to the ringing slogans of the American Revolution and the French Revolution. They felt that a new age was dawning, in which the Jew would be home at last, an age of justice for every individual. The morbid myths of the past would fade into oblivion and the prophetic ideals would become the foundation of a humane society, based upon the principles of reason and brotherhood.

To be sure, the great hopes of nineteenth century liberalism, socialism and nationalism were shadowed even then by tragic shortcomings and sad setbacks. But, it was possible to believe that humanism was the “wave of the future.” Herzlian Zionism was still conceived in the hopeful spirit of liberalism. Herzl, Weizmann and Brandeis taught that the progressive nations of the West would help the Jews to acquire Palestine and to build it as a Jewish homeland. The Balfour Declaration and, later, the Palestinian Mandate that was granted to Britain and, still later, the U.N. partition plan marked a series of high-water marks of international morality. The new age of freedom for all the oppressed nationalities coincided with the stirrings of rebirth of the Jewish people in their ancestral land.

The rise of Nazism and, later, the Holocaust so shocked many, perhaps most, of the Jewish people that their messianic hope was gradually transformed from progressive idealism to pessimistic radicalism. Human-

4. *Der Allgemeiner Journal*, July 9, 1982, p. 13.

5. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. VI, p. 985.

ity is an idle abstraction. Each nation must fight for itself with no holds barred. "In blood and fire, Judea fell; in blood and fire, Judea will be built." "Two banks to the Jordan river; this side is ours, the other one, too" — these slogans of the Zionist Revisionists did not reflect the thinking of the older Zionists and the political leaders of Israel. Socialist-Zionists, like Ben Gurion, Eshkol and Golda Meir, were liberals and humanists. But Begin and Sharon reflect the post-Holocaust mentality, which is all the more powerful because it was so long suppressed.

Many American Jews did not "internalize" the impact of the Holocaust until the last decade. So deep were the roots of liberalism in the American Jewish psyche, that they continued to flourish in spite of the horrors of the Holocaust which American Jews experienced only vicariously. Furthermore, American Jewish life is founded on the humane principles of liberalism and human rights. And a good life it is. So, American Jews cannot but feel the unbearable tension between the two basic world-views, both rooted in their ambivalent heritage.

Progressive messianists ennobled Jewish nationalism, but the apocalyptic visionaries may now be in command; they see all current issues in the perspective of a gathering Armageddon. War is the way of the world. One war leads to the next war. The task of annihilating opponents "must be completed." Strangely, mystical pietists and radical pessimists have discovered their common roots.

Is it good for the Jews? Or is it, *has vesholom*, a minefield of horrors waiting to happen? My point is that the answer depends on the kind of messianism that is cultivated. Is it the projection of idealism and hope or is it the outgrowth of fear, accumulated resentment, a skewed vision of the world, an absolutist categorization of people, an imposition of ancient nightmares upon a world armed to the teeth? Only rational self-criticism can separate the brave and pure visions of our classical prophets from the menacing myths of the self-mythifiers, after their several kinds.

Israel today is one of the central pillars of the free world. It is also one of the flashpoints of a nuclear global war that would devastate mankind. The apocalyptic version of messianism would contribute to the second eventuality; the recapture by Jewish people, generally, and Israelis, in particular, of the genius of prophetic idealism and the art of self-criticism can prevent a world-catastrophe and bring to reality the dreams of a universal society of peace and justice.

(I wrote this article during the Lebanese war, in the hope of casting some light on the developing chasm between the two kinds of Jewish messianism. The immediate consequences of that war are not as significant as their long-range effects. Jews must sort out what their vision of humanity really is. The future is commentary.)

The Centenary of Jewish Immigration to the United States: 1881-1981

JOSEPH EDELMAN

THE YEAR 1981 MARKED THE CENTENNIAL OF the third, or East European (largely Russian), wave of Jewish immigration to the United States. It was this massive movement which was destined to give form and shape to contemporary American Jewish patterns of life and institutions.

Through an irony of history, particularly Jewish history — which abounds in the unexpected and/or catastrophic — an event in Russia a little over a hundred years ago, the assassination of Czar Alexander II on March 13, 1881 in St. Petersburg, triggered a series of developments which were to change radically the configuration of world Jewry and of Jewish society.

The Jewish developments during the last century should also be perceived within the context of burgeoning world population; dramatic increase in the number of new nations; the ravages of wars and revolutions; unprecedented assembly line slaughter of human beings; striking scientific, medical, and social changes; advances in sophisticated technology; rapid satellite communications; the microchip revolution; miracle drugs; organ transplants; genetic engineering. Yet, despite the technological and scientific advances in this century of high sophistication, there were, in 1981, more than 14,000,000 refugees — and the number is still growing. Moreover, additional millions live under oppressive regimes. Heightened international tensions within the context of a general climate of violence and terrorism in which anti-Semitic activities carried out by right wing, neo-nazi, PLO and Arab terrorists with international connections, have increased the vulnerability of Jews and have generated additional “push” factors augmenting the numbers of Jewish migrants.

The terrorist bombing which killed Czar Alexander II on that fateful day a century ago, although the revolutionaries were caught and hanged, provided a convenient rationale for the successor government of Czar Alexander III to inflame peasant mobs to engage in an orgy of murder, pillage, rapine, and the destruction of Jews and their possessions. Fomented by the government, the attacks upon the Jewish scapegoats were designed to take advantage of the endemic anti-Semitism, to focus

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attention upon Jews and thus distract the populace from the intractable problems besetting the Czarist regime. Indeed, the word "pogrom" is a Russian contribution unique in the lexicon of human destruction. As the dictionary defines it:

"pogrom: (Yiddish fr. Russ. Lit., devastation): an organized massacre of helpless people; specif: such as massacre of Jews."

The devastation caused by the series of pogroms unleashed against Jews, along with other measures, were designed to make Jewish existence almost intolerable. Particularly damaging were legislative acts such as the infamous May Laws of 1882, which uprooted hundreds of thousands of Jews from the villages and communities in which they had lived for centuries, and forced them to move into highly congested cities. There they found it difficult to find even cramped living quarters. Moreover, jobs were yet more scarce.

These laws affected every facet of Jewish existence. Inter alia, they restricted the number of Jews permitted to attend Russian universities as well as the kinds of occupations in which they were permitted to engage. In addition, they were not permitted to rent or own land outside of the towns or cities, nor could they keep their shops open on the Christian Sabbath or Christian holidays.

Taking advantage of the endemic anti-Semitism intensified by the official and folk anti-Jewish atmosphere, this attitude was encapsulated in the Russian slogan, *Bey Zhidov spasay Rossiya* ("Beat a Jew and save Russia"), the slogan of the anti-Semitic groups of Black Hundreds. These elements, along with the grinding poverty of Jews confined to the "pale of settlement," increased the pressures to leave that country.

Parenthetically, it should be noted that, in Czarist Russia, 94% of the Jews lived within the "pale of settlement," an area of some 386,000 square miles from the Baltic to the Black Sea, located in Western and Southwestern Russia and the Ukraine. Selected Jews could live outside of this area only by special permission. Within the pale, the Jewish population increased from one million in 1800 to four million in 1880. Among other things, this number taxed the possibilities of economic development and further generated the "push" factor. Moreover, the Jewish population overflow at that time exerted additional pressure to leave the overcrowded and hostile milieu and constituted another significant "push" factor. According to Professor Roberto Bachi of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, regarded as the doyen of Jewish demography, East European Jews in the 19th century married young, married other Jews, and were characterized by a fertility rate of 7.5 children per child-bearing woman. What is more, 30% of Jewish women then had more than ten children. Professor Bachi's studies tend to confirm that among the consequences of the high birth rate and relatively low infant mortality rate, the Jewish population in Eastern Europe prior to the turn of the century was not diminished, even though there was a substantial outflow of migrants.

Of the approximately 8,000,000 Jews in Europe in 1881, 5,000,000 were in Czarist Russia; some 2,000,000 in the Austro-Hungarian Empire; about 500,000 in Germany; over 250,000 in Rumania; and the remainder in Western Europe. It should be noted that a large proportion of the Jewish population in Russia, Austria and Eastern Prussia were descendants of Polish Jews who had lived in the Kingdom of Poland before successive dismemberments of that country by its neighbors.

Significantly, Eastern Europe, particularly Poland and Russia, had served as the Jewish fertile seedbed that generated a rich Jewish intellectual, religious, cultural and social life, produced world-renowned religious academies, encouraged the Haskalah movement, Zionism, and the Bund, and created vibrant Hebrew and Yiddish literature with publishing houses, press, theatre, schools, writers and artists, as well as a communal welfare system and other attributes of a distinctive Jewish lifestyle.

From this area stemmed the world Jewish numerical increase as well as Jewishly creative leadership. From these sources flowed a stream of Jewish migrants having religious and/or secular orientation. They were steeped in Jewish knowledge and had a strong commitment to the Jewish heritage. Their arrival in Palestine-Israel, the United States and other countries in the West strengthened and enriched the various communities numerically and spiritually. With the explosion of the Holocaust upon the European Jews, this formerly fertile Jewish seedbed was transformed to stubble and human ash.

The East European exodus was composed predominantly, but not exclusively, of emigrants from Russia. Others came from Poland, Austria-Hungary, and other East European countries. The exodus from that part of the world, and, later, from Asian and North African countries, led not only to the increase of the Jewish population in communities in the United States, but also in Western European countries, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Palestine-Israel, and Latin America. The latter area is a potential source of Jewish emigrants, depending upon, among other factors, the perceived threat to Jewish life and the degree of instability of a particular country. These Jewish migrants have reinvigorated and transformed Jewish life in the new areas to which they went and constituted the most significant Jewish population transplantation in Jewish history.

In the course of the past century, there has been a total change of Jewish population concentration. Historic Jewish communities in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean basin where Jews had been deeply rooted, particularly in Arab lands, for more than 2,000 years, have been either liquidated or decimated. The melancholy roster of Jewish communities that have gone into eclipse include, among others, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Algeria, Aden, Syria, Tunisia and Morocco. In Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Poland have been added to this list. The latter country, prior to World War II, had a thriving Jewish population of almost 3,500,000 souls, and served as a reservoir for

Jewish scholars, teachers, and rabbinic leadership which spiritually nourished Jewish communities in various parts of the world. It also sent its natural increase to augment the numbers of other Jewish communities. Now the curtain has descended upon 1,000 years of Jewish life and creativity in Poland, marking the end of an era. That former population center of Jewish life has been reduced to some 6,000 souls, mostly ill and elderly, in the Jewish graveyard which is modern Poland.

With the massive migratory movements and the disappearance of so many hitherto deeply rooted Jewish communities, the center of Jewish population concentration shifted to the United States. The second largest world Jewish community is in Israel. Both are nations of immigrants. Israel in particular is not only a homeland for Jewish refugees, it is a symbol which gives added meaning and inspiration to the world Jewish community.

Jewish migration may be perceived as a result of complex developments and interaction between Jewish and general historic phenomena. Among the determinants activating the migration process, and which differ in salience for different groups and individuals, are: perceived lack of freedom; overpopulation; racial, religious, social or political oppression; limitation of educational opportunity; economic barriers; frustration of cultural and ideological expression; discriminatory differential treatment; desire for reunion with families; social and political instability in the host countries.

Choice of a particular end-destination depends upon perceived advantages or "pull" factors of a country willing to receive the newcomer and where the "push" factors may be resolved for the individual in a positive manner according to his perception. While the "push-pull" factors are generic to all migrants, for a Jew these elements take on added salience since, historically, the Jew has often been considered an alien, a stranger, an outsider even in host societies where Jewish communities had flourished for thousands of years. Indeed, the traditional founder of Judaism, the Patriarch Abraham, was himself a migrant when he followed the call to leave his kinsmen and his birthplace, Ur Khasdim, with its many associations and memories, and to migrate as a stranger and wanderer to Canaan, the Promised Land. From the Jewish perspective, migration has not only served as a safety valve to escape possible destruction; it may also be considered the loom upon which the distinctive and variegated pattern of Jewish history has been woven through the ages.

The most turbulent and eventful period in Jewish and world history, the past century of massive Jewish migrations, with the United States and Palestine-Israel as principal destinations, produced major shifts westward in Jewish geographic concentrations. Of the more than 6,000,000 Jews in this exodus, the most significant Jewish population transplantation in history, some 4,000,000, were assisted by HIAS and its predecessor agencies.

Viewing this movement in historic retrospect, one sees that the migrants and/or their descendants, by taking the wanderer's staff in hand, in a providential and destiny-laden decision to leave their hearths and homes when they were still able to make that fateful choice, were saved from the horrors of destruction by the Nazi hordes.

The cold statistical figure of millions of migrants, although mind-boggling in dimension, barely conveys the human story and tragedy, the fears and sufferings and dreams and hopes and aspirations and travail, and the highly personal world of each individual embraced in this number. To paraphrase the Talmud, the 6,000,000 lives affected were 6,000,000 worlds saved. For, as the Jewish sages pointed out: "He who saves a human life, it is as if he has saved the entire world."

While a small rivulet of Russian Jews streamed to Palestine, the masses of Jews opting for America took on aspects of a torrential flood. The United States drew millions of Jews across 3,000 miles to a new world with new hope and opportunities — the fabled *goldene medinah*. The magnitude of this huge migratory wave of Jewish men, women and children, primarily from Eastern Europe, may be gauged by the unprecedented numbers involved. Between 1881-1900 some 632,000 reached the new land.

Meanwhile, the situation in Eastern Europe became increasingly worse. In 1903 the Kishinev pogrom, which aroused worldwide protests, impelled additional thousands of Jews to leave the blood-soaked grounds of their domiciles. In 1904, the number reaching the United States was 106,236; the following year it was 129,910; and, in 1906, it was a record 153,748, the largest number ever to arrive in one year. Among the HIAS-assisted arrivals in 1906 were Mabovich, a cabinet-maker, and his family, who finally reached Milwaukee after a lengthy journey from Kiev. One of his daughters, Golda, was later to become the Prime Minister of Israel. In the decade from 1901-1910, they were among the 976,263 Jewish immigrants who arrived in this country. Between 1911 and 1920, an additional 491,165 came. Thus, in the four decades between 1881 and 1920, some 2,100,000 Jews reached these shores. They not only significantly increased the American Jewish population; they created a new Jewish cultural base as well as the Jewish institutions currently prevalent on the American Jewish scene.

Emigration involved the painful process of uprooting, which affected psychological, economic, cultural, relational, and other aspects of life. American letters and money sent by those who had come earlier, along with advertisements from railroad and steamship lines eager to amass large profits from the transportation of migrants, provided additional stimulation to the emigration movement. The massive flow of human beings was spurred also by the phenomenon of "chain migration" in which relatives and friends went to communities drawn there by those who had arrived previously and had established themselves. The difficul-

ties for the migrants were compounded by the very fact of travel to a distant and strange land with different customs and language, especially since many had seldom traveled more than a few kilometers from their homes in the old country.

The early immigrants embarked on their destiny-laden voyage largely destitute, risking physical dangers, emotional traumas, often crossing borders illegally, fearing capture and imprisonment at every step. Many were crowded like cattle in the cavernous steerage holds of liners sailing from Bremen and Hamburg or of the mighty Cunarders from Liverpool. Before reaching their destination, they experienced seasickness, miserable “accommodations,” tainted or inedible food, deception by unscrupulous steamship agents, homesickness, bewilderment. Those who arrived in New York harbor were greeted by the Statue of Liberty with its welcoming sonnet written by a young Jewish girl, Emma Lazarus, inscribed on its base.

In the bewildering new world, the immigrant attempted to sink new roots after having sundered the many ties, tangible and intangible, which had bound him to a world he knew well — the language and memories and graves of his loved ones, the danger of sudden, unprovoked attack. He recalled the narrow, crooked, cobbled streets lined with ramshackle houses, the synagogue and market square, and the traditions and customs which had grown through the centuries and constituted the web of life which gave him meaning and a sense of continuity. . . . All of these, and more, are either retained in the twilight memories and nostalgia of the old, or written in diaries and books of recollections and inscribed in histories and sociological studies, as well as in evocative artistic and literary creations.

The epochal Jewish movement to the United States, unlike that of other nationality groups arriving in this country, often comprised complete Jewish families and even entire communities who left the *shtetl* with its culture and way of life. Among those who descended the gangplank at Ellis Island, the portal to the America of their cherished hopes and dreams, were the religious, the secular, the socialists, the writers and community leaders and scholars, the cobblers and rabbis and draymen and innkeepers and beggars and *heder*-teachers and poor shopkeepers and matchmakers and weavers and blacksmiths and butchers and tailors and hundreds of other prototypes of the characters dramatized in “Fiddler on the Roof” — and even Sholom Aleichem himself, who was deeply immersed in this life and who, with considerable talent, became the recreator of personae who populated that world now forever gone.

But setting foot in the new land did not end their ordeal. In Ellis Island, in order to qualify for admission, they had to undergo dreaded medical examinations and psychological tests, as well as other humiliating procedures. One of the first HIAS measures was to station a representative at Ellis Island, “Isle of Tears” for many who had been slated for

deportation by the sometimes harsh and imperious-acting immigrant officials. Because of language barriers and legal formalities, immigrants scheduled to be deported were rarely able to defend themselves. A typical letter to HIAS from an immigrant detained on Ellis Island read: "Greetings from Ellis Island. They want to send me back to Kletsk. For G-d's sake! Help!" HIAS' intervention with the Board of Inquiry in behalf of these unfortunates effectively decreased the number sent back.

Among other services provided by agencies which were predecessors of HIAS were interventions with the shipping companies to improve the shocking conditions obtaining in ships' steerages, and the location of relatives of those immigrants who had been cleared at Ellis Island and who were waiting anxiously to be reunited with them. After numerous indignities and being numbered and lettered and herded into the Customs Wharf on Ellis Island, those permitted to enter the new world in the decade of the 1880's joined an American Jewish community of some 250,000 in a total U.S. population of 50,000,000.

It should be noted that the newcomers were generally young. Significantly, while 45% of the Jewish population of Russia was between the ages of 14 and 45, 70% of those who left were in that category. That generation had been drawn to the new world by the magnetic pull exerted by the American promise of freedom and seemingly unlimited economic opportunity, along with the "wonders" described in letters from previous arrivals. These included accounts of "water flowing from the walls" (faucets), "railroads running above the rooftops" (elevated trains) and even Jewish policemen — marvels which astounded many in the *shtetl*.

But the path to the promise and the magic of America led through the teeming Jewish ghettos on the "East Side" or their geographical equivalents, of large metropolitan centers where the newcomers went through the crucible of the sweatshops, grinding poverty, identity crises, and considerable personal sacrifice to enable their children to secure an intensive education and thus break from the squalor of the ghetto and set out upon the road leading to a higher socio-economic status — and the American dream.

As increasing numbers swarmed into these congested areas, recreating much of the way of life to which they had been accustomed, they took on aspects of a transplanted Jewish Eastern European community. However, their homes in the tenements were different. The "green-horns" were crammed into damp, dark, foul-smelling apartments, some of whose small, crowded rooms overflowed onto flimsy fire escapes, used for storage of boxes and household goods, and as sleeping places during the stifling summer days. Confronted with the harsh existential reality of a different world, separated by language and cultural barriers which often hindered their acculturation to the new world, and waging a fierce struggle for survival, many were forced to flout time-honored religious

laws, work on the Sabbath, shave their beards, and desecrate dietary and other laws to eke out a living.

The new lifestyle often engendered a good deal of guilt, and tended to destroy the roots of Jewish family and community life as they had been known. Those who persisted in maintaining their religious observances were frequently forced to work under even more substandard conditions and longer hours to enable them to observe the Sabbath, religious holidays, and other Jewish traditions.

Moreover, it was not uncommon to see families huddled on sidewalks with their bedding and other household effects, evicted from their apartments for inability to pay the rent. Passersby, moved by the sight of women and little children in a pathetically small, fearful group, would throw coins into a plate to help the stricken family. Weighed down by the wretchedness and despair of their troubles in the new world, many would bitterly exclaim: "*Ah klog tzu Columbus*".

Insofar as Jewish religion was concerned, the Slutzker Rov, Rabbi Jacob David Willowsky, who visited the United States at the turn of the century, chastized a meeting of Orthodox leaders for having immigrated to the "*trefa* land where even the stones are impure." Whoever came here, he said, was "an apostate in Israel." He continued that, in Europe, "they say that Yiddishkeit in America is nothing, but gold is found in the gutter. The fact is, neither gold nor Yiddishkeit is to be found here."

Indeed, gold was not to be easily found in the new world. However, what the newcomers ultimately did find, after suffering the pains and social dislocations involved in the process of adjustment, were certain intangible components of the American vision that were of infinitely greater value. Among these were such basic distinguishing characteristics of American society as the concept of voluntarism, the right of the individual to decide freely whether or not to become associated with certain organizations, institutions, or philosophies; pluralism, the notion of differing and sometimes competing institutions and philosophies existing side by side; the egalitarian tradition which made possible achievement of certain goals without regard to previous socio-economic status, national origin, religion and other qualifying criteria.

Moreover, for Jews, the traditional concept of messianism, particularly secular messianism, tended to generate increased striving to attain the promise of a better America — especially when confronted with initially harsh socio-economic conditions. To remedy them many sought to establish labor unions and laid the foundations for the unionization process. In conjunction with this, Jews drew upon their tradition to develop and apply the process of arbitration in seemingly intractable labor-management disputes — an adaptation of the Bet Din, a council composed of lay and rabbinic leaders who sought to understand and assess the problems within the context of the respective equities involved, and of Jewish traditional concern for impartiality and justice.

Against this setting, a fortiori, the Jewish Labor Union provided added stimulus to the general American unionization movement. Of particular note was the historic, first written contract between labor and management, the so-called "protocol of peace" signed in 1910 by Hart Schaffner and Marx. This document, which established an industrial court as a substitute for what might have been constant strike action, served as a model for industrial peace for modern trade unionism.

However, while the unions were in process of development, the newcomers were confronted with immediate existential problems. To cope with the day to day struggle for subsistence a new institution was generated on the American scene — the "boarder." Persons of either sex, regardless of age, often rented a room or, rather, a space with a tenement family. At times there were no beds; some even slept on mattresses or blankets. Frequently, ten to fourteen persons were crowded into apartments consisting of two small rooms. The more "boarders" that the family succeeded in attracting, the more income they had.

Earning a living tended to sap the vitality and embitter the hopes to which they had looked forward with such anticipation. Consequently, to augment the low wages and subsistence levels, it was not uncommon to find parents, children, other relatives, and some boarders as well, in a cramped tenement apartment. The boarder may have paid \$3.00 a month for his room and free coffee, almost a third of the family's \$10.00 a month rent. In those days a herring cost 2¢; a quart of milk cost 4¢; a loaf of bread 2¢; a pound of kosher meat 12¢. Considering that the average weekly income was almost \$8.00, the boarder's rent contributed substantially to the family income.

Despite the overcrowding, the system was economically beneficial for the renter and the boarder. However, such housekeeping arrangements, in addition to constituting a fire hazard, dangers to health because of inadequate and primitive sanitation facilities, elementary lack of privacy caused by sheer human congestion, frequently engendered psychological and familial complications, the desertion of a spouse who at times "ran away" with a boarder, and other difficulties.

Such situations were often the subjects of letters sent to the "*Bintel Brief*," a bundle of letters sent for advice and counsel to the editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, the widely read Yiddish newspaper.

Understandably, one of the most pressing problems faced by the newcomer, especially with little, if any, command of the English language, was that of securing a job and thus attaining economic independence. To facilitate this, the former Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society established an Employment Bureau which was kept open every night except Friday. During the winter of 1907, when there was considerable unemployment in New York, city editions of the English newspapers were brought into the HIAS offices (then at 248 East Broadway, N.Y.C.), fresh off the presses on Park Row, at that time New York's journalistic center, and

members of the HIAS board would remain until early morning scanning the want ads and advising the immigrants.

Although most arrived with little more than what they had on their backs, the immigrants came with a lingua franca, Yiddish, and shared Jewish customs and values which facilitated their communication with American Jews. This wealth of cultural baggage enriched the American Jewish community and contributed significantly to the culturally pluralistic symphony of America. Among other things, they established a flourishing Yiddish press, a Yiddish theatre, philanthropic and other institutions. Yiddish writers and scholars proliferated. A Jewish educational system was established including religious and secular schools. There were mutual aid societies, study circles, and other Jewish institutions designed to deepen American Jewish roots and to strengthen Jewish identity.

In effect, the pioneer immigrant generation sought to replicate on the American scene, insofar as practicable, a number of the institutions with which their lives had been so intimately bound up in the Old World. Among others were numerous and varied *hevrahs* — associations having specialized objectives: to provide assistance to the needy; or to dower poor brides to enable them to get married; visiting the sick; free loan societies; burial associations; helping the wayfarer; providing Jewish education for the indigent young; arranging for study circles; providing clothing for the poor; matzos and other special holiday foods for the needy; and a host of other services which are today the responsibility of Jewish social service and educational organizations. Moreover, hundreds of synagogues were established in close proximity to one another, many organized by *landsleit*, i.e., arrivals from the same town or region, and at times having a distinctive order of service. *Landsmanschaft* organizations mushroomed.

For the newcomers these organizations generated a particularly warm “at home” feeling. They knew the people who had lived in their communities, shared memories and experiences in common in Yiddish, and were made to feel as members of an extended family. The *landsmanschaft* also provided financial assistance, job leads, advice in meeting problem situations, health, cemetery and other benefits. In the primary area of settlement, the newcomers also established numerous kosher butcher shops, bakeries, and other stores featuring delicacies and staples found in their former milieu.

The cultural scene was rich with intellectual excitement. Highly committed devotees of the differing philosophies vigorously supported their particular *weltanschauung* in the face of those adhering to other views. In addition to the perennial conflict between the religious and the secular, those who were committed to Zionism — which crystallized as a political movement at the first Zionist Congress in 1897, and which embraced within its philosophy religious, labor and other groups — were opposed by the Bundists-Yiddishist adherents of the Jewish Socialist Party — the General Federation of Jewish Workers in Lithuania, Poland and Russia

organized in Vilna, also in 1897. These ideological movements, among others, generated their own fraternal orders, schools, parties and publications, intensifying the intellectual ferment in the Jewish immigrant neighborhoods.

As the pioneer generation gradually became acculturated and "Americanized," the outbreak of World War I brought added misery, degradation and starvation to Jews, particularly in Eastern Europe. The problems were compounded because of the unavailability of shipping space and the restriction on Jewish emigration by belligerent countries in order to conserve able-bodied males for needed manpower in their armies. One of the immediate results was a drastic diminution of flow of movement from Europe. Thus, while more than 138,000 Jewish immigrants arrived in the United States during 1914, immigration was reduced to some 3,000 in 1918 and 1919. The Russian revolution in 1917 and the civil war which followed again made Jews targets for banditry and pogroms. Emigration became a vital necessity. Since the route via Western Europe was barred by the Germans, many undertook the hazardous trek across the immense territories of Siberia.

In May 1921, the first measure to restrict general immigration to the United States, the Quota Immigration Law, went into effect, despite the massive efforts opposing it. Imposing drastic qualifications upon the American tradition of asylum, it limited the annual immigration of each nationality to 3% of its co-nationals residing in the United States, according to the census of 1910. This was obviously aimed at immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. One immediate result was the reduction of Jewish immigration from 119,000 during fiscal 1920/1921 to 53,000 in the following year 1921/1922.

The accession of Hitler to power in 1933 spurred the so-called "intellectual immigration" to the United States, especially during the 1930s and 1940s. This wave was different from its predecessors because of the large number of immigrants with advanced academic backgrounds, artistic skills, scholarly and scientific training. A number of these intellectuals were able to continue their advanced work in such institutions as the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton and the University in Exile — The New School for Social Research. The acculturation of the intellectual immigrants and their significant influence upon American thought and education was facilitated not only by the freedom of thought and freedom from fear in this country, but by the flexibility of American institutions of higher learning, where many found positions either by appointment or by the creation of new posts in academia. Of the many fields of endeavor in which they had renown, whether as artists, composers, writers, publishers, mathematicians, medicine, sociology and related disciplines, they made signal contributions to two relatively new fields: they became leading figures in the development of psychoanalysis and they had major roles in developing atomic science in the United States. Among the many

notable arrivals were Albert Einstein, Bruno Bettelheim, Max Horkheimer, Arnold Schoenberg, Edward Teller, Henry Kissinger, Hannah Arendt and Hans Morgenthau.

When World War II ended, there were at least a million displaced persons in Europe who had survived the carnage and who feared political or religious persecution if they returned to their former homelands. 200,000 of them were Jewish. President Truman, through his Directive of December 1945, opened the way for many of the DPs to immigrate to the United States.

The desperate situation of refugees and displaced persons barred from entering the United States by the discriminatory restrictive quota provisions of the immigration law generated a strong reaction within the country against it. As a result, a series of emergency legislative acts followed including the Truman Directive, the Displaced Persons Act, the Refugee Relief Act, the special legislation in 1957 and 1958, and the acts relating to Hungarian parolees.

Thus, 711,212 persons were enabled to enter the United States as a result of emergency legislation. Of these, 84,334 (11.9%) were Jews. In addition there were 80,000 other Jews admitted during the same period under regular quota laws, mostly on the basis of family reunion. In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson symbolically went to Ellis Island to sign the law eliminating the U.S. immigration quota system based on national origins.

A number of world crises after World War II swelled the flow of Jewish migrants. Among these were the exodus of Jews from Egypt as a result of the Suez crisis in 1956; the Hungarian uprising in the same year; developments in Morocco in 1961, Algeria in 1962, and Cuba in 1965; the Arab-Israeli War in 1967; the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia; the forced migration (expulsion) from Poland in the same year; the flight of thousands of Jews from Chile after the election of Salvador Allende Gossens as president in 1970; violent clashes between Moslems and Christians in Lebanon in 1977; the assumption of power in Iran by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1979.

One of the unanticipated developments following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War was its impact upon Jews throughout the world, especially in the USSR, where it generated added pride and renewed confidence. This was widely regarded as a significant stimulus to the beginnings of Soviet Jewish activism including open demonstrations, dramatic demands for exit documents, and the virtual change of the Soviet Jews from their erstwhile categorization as the "Jews of Silence."

The ebb and flow of Jewish immigration to the United States during the past century, and particularly in the more recent past, has brought Jews from a number of nations including Russia, Poland, Rumania, Syria, Hungary, Lebanon, Egypt, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Cuba, Morocco, Algeria, Iran, the Soviet Union. Among others, mention should also be made of arrivals from Israel. These have added to the many Jewish cul-

tural strands which have enriched and strengthened American Jewish communal life. However, the world Jewish spotlight has come full circle, and is again focused just as it was a century ago, upon the 2,000,000–3,000,000 Jews estimated to be in the Soviet Union, and their continuing struggle to leave. A century ago, it was primarily the Russian Jewish immigrants to the various Western countries who had significant roles in developing the pattern of Jewish communal life in Palestine-Israel, the United States, Australia, and other countries. One hundred years later, their children and grandchildren continue to shape Jewish communal life and to occupy leadership roles in Jewish communal affairs in the West. Concurrently, many of the children, grandchildren, and other relatives of the pioneer Russian immigration who are still in the Soviet Union are struggling to rejoin their families in the free world.

From the beginning of the most recent wave of Soviet Jewish emigration in 1966 through 1981, more than 265,000 Jews have been permitted to leave the USSR. Of these, more than 165,000 arrived in Israel, some 87,000 arrived in the United States, and about 13,000 have found new homes in Canada, Australia, and elsewhere. However, it should be noted that the flow of Jews from the Soviet Union, which peaked to almost 52,000 in 1979, plummeted to fewer than 10,000 in 1981. According to students of Soviet Jewish affairs the Jewish emigration rate is largely a function of U.S.–USSR relationships. This view was substantiated by a declaration at the Madrid Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (the Helsinki Accords) by Soviet spokesman, Sergei Kondrashov, who publicly linked progress in reunification of families (a code word for emigration) to the status of American-Soviet detente. In effect, Soviet Jews who seek to leave are perceived by the USSR as hostages, bargaining chips to gain improved relationships with the United States. So long as the deep freeze in these relationships continue, according to Soviet Jewish specialists, there will be only token emigration.

Since the Communist Revolution in Russia in 1917, Jews in that country have been increasingly deprived of institutional and other instrumentalities for the transmission of the Jewish heritage. They have been hindered from establishing close relationships with fellow Jews in the West and have been victimized, harassed, and largely isolated from the general society. There has been a campaign to make of Jews “non-persons,” to expunge from the official record Jewish achievements, historic contributions of Jews to human development and, in particular, the role of the Jewish heritage in forming the distinctive Jewish lifestyle. Relevant documents have been removed from history books, libraries and other repositories of knowledge or have been altered to convey a pejorative depiction of Jews.

As a consequence, many Soviet Jews arrive in the United States, Israel, and other countries with little or no knowledge of Yiddishkeit, although a very large proportion do have a high level of secular education

or technological training. In this respect, Jews who have lived in the Baltic countries over which the USSR took hegemony in World War II were under Soviet rule for a shorter time and, therefore, had not been subjected to the restrictions of their Jewish cultural life until the 1940s. Many of them, along with Jews from the Georgian republic who had been steeped in Jewish life and culture, went to Israel in the early 1970s.

Significantly, many of the children of the pioneer immigrant generation brought home from their public schools the language and customs of the new land which helped in the "Americanization" of that generation. Currently, soviet Jewish children who attend Jewish schools in the United States bring home a new appreciation, if not the very beginnings, of Yiddishkeit for their parents as the families painfully and slowly reconstruct new lives founded upon human dignity and Jewish values.

Soviet and other Jews who arrived in the United States during the last century from lands of jeopardy are today components of a thriving American Jewish community. The most numerous and influential in Jewish history, it has special responsibilities and obligations to Jews throughout the world, and particularly to Israel. More than 80% of the American Jewish population is native born. However, there is a lively awareness that American Jews and, indeed, the country as a whole, is a nation of immigrants. Beneficiaries of both the Jewish and American heritages, many of the native born American Jews are also aware that, but for the providential immigration of their fathers, grandfathers, and other family members, they, too, might have been caught up in the inferno of the Holocaust.

Indeed, world events have generated increased awareness that no Jew is a stranger wherever in the world he might be, since he is constantly surrounded by a visible and invisible web of traditional Jewish support and understanding. In the words of Elie Wiesel, Honorary HIAS Director:

Alone, the individual Jew would have been lost many times and long ago, but a Jew is never alone. Being Jewish is a remedy against solitude, for a Jew is forever surrounded by his community, visible or invisible. Jews have never before been so organically linked to one another. If we shout here, we are heard in Kiev. If Jews cry in Kiev, they are heard and worried over in Jerusalem. And if Jews are sad in Jerusalem, we are moved to tears here.

In the century between 1881 and 1981, the American Jewish community increased in numbers from 250,000 to 6,000,000, the largest concentration of Jews in Jewish history and in the contemporary Jewish world. The phenomenal growth was largely due to the immigration of more than 3,000,000 Jews, primarily from Eastern Europe and principally from Russia. The genocidal fury which destroyed 6,000,000 Jews in Europe also largely eliminated the potential sources of Jewish migration from that continent to Israel, the United States, and other countries in the West. Today, as the children and grandchildren of the pioneer immigrant gen-

eration stand on the threshold of tomorrow at the end of a destiny-laden century, upheavals, tensions, terrorism and oppression in many parts of the world continue to spill over time lines and international boundaries, and impel Jews and others to leave their lands of domicile — when able to do so — and to migrate to safer havens. Indeed, in the current world situation the potential for Jewish migration continues to be high.

The Jewish world has completely changed in the last century. Deprived of massive Jewish reinforcements from migration, the respective Jewish communities have turned inward to further their Jewish development indigenously. They built upon the Jewish historical tradition which they shared in common with their forebears, along with a sense of mutuality and interdependence as a community of faith and fate. However, the 19th century Jewish fertility characteristics cited by Professor Bachi contrast sharply with those of the current world Jewish population. Among other elements, Jewish communities today are marked by an aging society, a high death rate, late age marriage, a low birth rate, along with an increased divorce rate, single person households and single parent families, assimilation, large-scale indifference to or ignorance of Jewish learning, high rate of inter-marriage, and, in many cases, a superficial sense of Jewish identity. These combine to further the erosion of Jewish life in open societies in which most Jewish communities now live.

The very beneficence of the American setting experienced by the immigrants and their descendants poses a challenge both to Jewish self-perception and to the continuity of Jewish group life. There is a danger of a *Gleichschaltung*, a slow and painless absorption and assimilation into the seductive American mainstream. Consequently, it is essential to develop strategies to maintain Jewish uniqueness and otherness which will not only benefit the Jewish community but will also strengthen and enrich the American cultural fabric.

The emerging new American Jewish generation, a mix of Jews whose forebears brought differing and enriching cultural and nationality strands from throughout the Jewish world, must assume the responsibilities of leadership and it is perhaps instructive, as a guideline, to recall the text of a sign in the Museum of the Diaspora in Tel Aviv: "Remember the past. Live in the present. Believe in the future" — essential components of Jewish continuity.

The Ethics of Gilgul

S. DANIEL BRESLAUER

HAMLET WAS NEITHER THE FIRST NOR THE last to ponder “that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns.” The history of human thought is filled with speculations about existence after death, about the immortality of the soul, about the soul’s continuing journey in the world to come. On this subject Jewish speculation has embraced a variety of views of which one of the most exotic and fascinating is that of *gilgul*. The term refers to a soul’s physical re-embodiment after having already passed through a previous existence.

Gilgul became a major Jewish concept only when the Zohar, in the thirteenth century, used it to justify the institution of levirate marriage.¹ Why should the prohibition of a man’s marrying his brother’s wife have been set aside in just this case? What value was there in having the brother marry his widowed sister-in-law? The mystics answered that the soul of the deceased entered into the child conceived through the levirate marriage. Thus *gilgul* served to justify an awkward institution of traditional Judaism. The naturalization of *gilgul* as a Jewish idea is characteristic of the process of Jewish thinking. Only when an abstract idea can be pressed into service for action, for halakhic living, does it have Jewish importance.

This “naturalization” of the idea of *gilgul* did not go unchallenged. Judaism already had a viable halakhic alternative to the levirate marriage — that of *halizah*. The mystic rationalization of the original practice was, thus, superfluous. The original arguments about the idea of *gilgul* focus on the halakhic question already discussed in the Talmud, of whether the levirate marriage or *halizah* is preferable.² The argument lent strength to the rationalistic opponents of Jewish mysticism. However, the idea of *gilgul* developed within Judaism and became disassociated from the halakhic question of the levirate marriage. While its implications for *action* were still primary, these were essentially *ethical* implications. Gershom Scholem notes that the real popularity of the idea stems from Lurianic Kabbalah—the sixteenth century movement that revitalized the Jewish

1. Gershom G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1961), pp. 242-3.

2. Ephraim Gottlieb, *Studies in the Kabbalah Literature* (Hebrew) edited by Joseph Hacker (Tel Aviv: Daf-Chen, 1976), pp. 370—396.

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mystical tradition. He points out that *gilgul* was used to emphasize the unique task that every Jew has in the redemption of the world. Since each Jew's task is special, it cannot be performed by anyone else. *Gilgul* stresses that if a task is left unfinished in one lifetime an individual may be granted another opportunity to make good that which he left undone.³

Scholem sees this emphasis as one which makes the individual engaged in "the work of self-emancipation."⁴ *Gilgul* makes the human being the agent of redemption, and is an exhortation to humans to fulfill their tasks. While this is a fascinating thought, it is difficult to support on the basis of Lurianic Kabbalah alone. The messianic elements in Lurianic thinking make God and cosmic patterns equally powerful with human beings, while *gilgul* plays only a minor role. There are, however, humanistic and ethical potentials in the Lurianic concept of *gilgul*. As later mystics—particularly the Polish Hasidim in the eighteenth century—and non-mystics—particularly the early modern Hebrew writers—developed the idea, its ethical implications were made more clear. Scholem's insight, while unconvincing for Lurianic Kabbalah, is helpful in tracing the history of *gilgul* as an evolving concept in Jewish thought.

Gilgul in Lurianic Kabbalah and in Polish Hasidism

In Lurianic thinking, as in the Zohar, *gilgul* is tied to the *halakhah* and provides an opportunity for fulfilling those commandments which have not yet been completed. Because of this emphasis on the commandments, *gilgul* is limited to men.⁵ And since almost every Jew has left some commandment or other unfulfilled, *gilgul* becomes a practical necessity. Those who have omitted praying with tefillin, who may have committed a sexual transgression (having intercourse by candle-light, for example), or forgetting to wash their hands before eating may correct these errors in another life. The soul's performance of these precepts in a new body reverses the damage done by their neglect in a previous one. *Gilgul* is, therefore, the means by which a soul is given the chance to accomplish all those *mizvot*⁶ demanded by the halakhic process without being limited to one human lifetime for their execution. *Gilgul* is, thus, a halakhic opportunity.

There are, however, other human deficiencies which are less halakhic and more ethical in nature. The informer, the tax collector, the social misfit are not precisely halakhic transgressors. *Gilgul* becomes for them a punishment rather than an opportunity. Because they have injured the community, they must be reborn in such a way that they *need* the community. Isaac Luria relates that the false Messiah, Joseph Della Reina, was

3. Scholem, *Major Trends*, pp. 279-284.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

5. Hayyim Vital, *Sefer Ha-Gilgulim* (Katzinelinbogen, 1885), p. 33.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

reborn as a black dog and sought help from Luria in overcoming the punishment of his *gilgul*.⁷ Informers and misfits who, through *gilgul*, became rats, mice, crows, and cows also turned to Luria for redemption.⁸ *Gilgul*, thus, was a process whereby society's malefactors became dependent upon society's leaders for their redemption.

Among such leaders, Isaac Luria is depicted as a wonder-working Rabbi whose spiritual power as representative of the community enabled him to cope with both types of *gilgul*. He could inform individuals about the commandments which they must perform in *this* incarnation; he could also help redeem those social misfits being punished by *gilgul*. The Baal Shem Tov, the renowned founder of Hasidism in Poland, also appears in a similar guise. He discovered his true vocation by performing the same sort of services that Luria did. Before revealing himself to the world, the Baal Shem Tov had an opportunity to ascend to the land of Israel, but had he done so the spark of Hasidism would have died before it had been ignited. It is told that a band of robbers offered to lead the Baal Shem Tov to Israel by a secret path. He found, however, that the path was blocked by a flaming sword, so he turned back. On his return he passed through a dry desert where he found a frog that was, in fact, the *gilgul* of a scholar who was being punished for neglecting to wash his hands before eating. From that transgression he had been led to many more and now stood in need of redemption. The Baal Shem Tov "elevated his soul" and freed him from this *gilgul*.⁹

This story is of interest because, while the transgressions involved are clearly halakhic in nature, the *gilgul* is in animal form and needs outside mediation before it can be redeemed. This is far from the "self-emancipation" which Scholem speaks of. A second aspect of the story is the way it interweaves the halakhic and the ethical. From the halakhic concern for washing of the hands the story moves to tell about transgressing every commandment. Hasidic thinking emphasizes the unity of ethics and commandment, of ritual and morality.

A further development of the idea of *gilgul* occurs in a tale told of the mature Baal Shem Tov (affectionately known as "the Besht," from the initials of his name),¹⁰ who had accepted the obligation of redeeming "holy sparks." His magical wisdom and supernatural power were well known, and the story explores further dimensions of his redemptive task. It is told that, in the course of his travels, he came to a certain village where one of his followers raised horses. The follower, being in awe of the Besht,

7. On Joseph Della Reina see the discussion by Joseph Dan in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Volume 10:240-241.

8. See *Tales in Praise of the Ari*, translated by Aaron Klein and Jenny Machlowitz Klein, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1970), pp. 14, 20.

9. In *Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*, translated and edited by Dan Ben-Amos and Jerome R. Mintz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), pp. 23-24.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 218-219.

offered him any present he would want. The Besht asked for a certain horse, but the disciple refused to grant that request since the animal in question was, indeed, an unusual and valued possession. What no other horse could do this one did. It ate little, drank less, and yet could pull the heaviest load. The Besht did not insist on this gift but asked that, instead, the disciple turn over to him a note of indebtedness which a certain man had given him. The follower agreed, but remarked that the Besht could not collect the debt because the man had already died. The Besht took the note, tore it in two, and no sooner had he done so than a cry went up—the exceptional horse had fallen dead! The Besht explained to his disciple that the horse had been a *gilgul* of the debtor who, because he had not been able to repay the debt during his lifetime, had to be reborn to work it off. In cancelling what was owed, the Besht freed the debtor's soul to return to heaven. As a miracle tale, the story shows the marvelous knowledge of the Besht who could recognize a horse that was really a reborn soul and who then redeemed that soul so that it could attain its heavenly rest.

Lurianic Kabbalah had emphasized that *gilgul* permitted a soul to return to earth to perform *mizvot* and that *gilgul* in the form of an animal was a punishment. Hasidism emphasized that *gilgul* in whatever form was both a punishment and an opportunity. In either case, *gilgul* was not self-emancipation but emancipation by means of a religious leader. Isaac Luria had to teach individuals which commandments were particularly suited for them. Both he and the Baal Shem Tov had to redeem the souls of those involved in *gilgul*. In each instance, however, an ethical issue was raised. For Luria the ethical issue was communal—acceptance of the community norms of the halakhah and the avoidance of social activities like tax collecting which only distress the community. The Baal Shem Tov stressed the interrelationship of ethics and halakhah and the obligations which both place on an individual not only in life but after death as well.

Gilgul and Humanistic Ethics

The idea of *gilgul* as self-emancipation is a modern one and is best exemplified in modern fiction. The story "Thou Shalt Not Covet," by I.L. Peretz represents such a view.¹¹ In it, the author establishes the theme at the very beginning: every Jew is expected to obey all of the commandments of the Torah, but since that is impossible in one lifetime each soul is granted a number of rebirths. The narrative then moves beyond this theme and ignores the question of commandments and *halakhah*. The point of the tale is that, despite many opportunities, a Jewish soul never learns how to enjoy life. The body craves satisfaction and the soul finds itself betrayed again and again by it. The story tells of an ascetic rabbi, at

11. *In This World and the Next: Selected Writings of I. L. Peretz*, translated by Moshe Spiegel (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1958), pp. 315-320.

the time of judgment, whose body cries out that it has been denied its share of life. *Gilgul* represents a chance to give the body its due. The next time around, although born to wealth and comfort, the soul still forces the body out into a snowstorm to atone for what is seen to be a sin. In the storm the body covets the warmth of a fire, and in the midst of this coveting the individual dies. The soul must, therefore, go out into the world of *gilgul* again.

Peretz is suggesting that life is, indeed, an opportunity to fulfill the "commandments." Those commandments, however, are life's own rather than the soul's imposed obligations. The soul can never discharge its mission if it does not allow the body to define the commandments. *Gilgul* is a metaphor for self-emancipation here because it is an opportunity to be free of artificial restraints on life. The story is ironic since the soul never achieves freedom. The ethics implied by *gilgul*, however, is that the self can become free when it allows nature to dictate the laws of life. For such an actualization of nature's laws the soul need only attend to its own body. It does not require an external mediator either to tell it what commandments still must be performed or to liberate it from a supernatural prison.

In another work of fiction, "Punishment and Reward," Judah Steinberg uses the idea that *gilgul* not only emphasizes the self-emancipation of the individual, but that it can be a concept humanizing life itself. The story tells of the death of two men. The first is the particular prize of Hell, having been a thief, a murderer and an adulterer with countless sins to his credit. His death, which occurs on a Yom Kippur that happens to fall on a Sabbath, is self-imposed. He has transgressed both ethical and ritual commandments. The other death occurs in an attempt to save the sinner by a man who has been perfectly righteous and risked himself for the sake of others. In his life, both ritual and ethical perfection have been realized.

After their deaths, there is no place in hell appropriate for the sinner. All the choice places of torment are filled to overflowing. In heaven, as well, no appropriate place can be found for the righteous man. All of the choice spots of bliss are already taken! After much deliberation a decision is made. No greater punishment can be given to the sinner than that he be returned to earth, where his evil deeds make it the greatest torment possible. No greater reward can be given to the righteous man than that he be returned to earth, where his piety will transform worldly existence into a veritable paradise. *Gilgul* is, thus, a metaphor for life itself. Each birth is an opportunity for reward or punishment, for living in either heaven or hell.

In the stories of Peretz and Steinberg the themes found in the concept of *gilgul* unite and are transformed. *Gilgul* represents the opportunity in life to perform commandments, it represents the need for solidarity with the community, it represents both punishment and promise. These themes are then woven together into a tapestry of self-emancipation. The self becomes free when it chooses life with the community, commandments that spring from the physical reality of

experience, and when it takes responsibility for making life either a reward or a punishment. An individual's life depends on choices and actions. *Gilgul* symbolizes the possibilities of life; ethics is the realization of those possibilities. The final message of the ethics of *gilgul* is that the choice lies with the individual.

At that point *gilgul* has developed from a traditionalism stressing community and halakhah to an existentialist affirmation of the individual. Gershom Scholem was particularly adroit at finding the revolutionary aspects of Jewish mysticism and pointed to the possibility of just such a revolutionary existentialism in the idea of *gilgul*. The working out, however, of that potential, did not take place in Lurianic Kabbalah. It required first the identification of ethical and halakhic transgressions as found in Hasidism. It then required moving from the need for a mediator to the belief that the isolated self could accomplish the task of redemption. This last stage occurred only with the early modern Hebrew writers. Scholem's insight is relevant and helpful as a tool by which to understand the evolution of religious ideas, which develop slowly but still in unexpected and revolutionary directions. Seen as an indication of such dynamic development, Scholem's views about *gilgul* are perceptive insights into the process of ethical reflection in Jewish religious thought.

The Four Faces of God: Toward a Theology of Powerlessness

WILLIAM ORBACH

FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FIRST temple, long before the birth of Jesus, through the Crusades, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal, and the horrors of the Holocaust, exile, suffering and powerlessness have shaped Jewish beliefs and found expression in Jewish liturgy and theological writings. Jewish tradition records four faces of God and the final one — that of a God Himself powerless as the Jews — may both account for the “failure” of the first three faces of God and suggest how Jewish powerlessness may lead to truly human power.

Jewish powerlessness has been a pervasive influence on Jewish history, psychology, and theology. The particular Jewish concept of God derives from this condition, making Judaism contrast psychologically with its Christian and Moslem sisters in the monotheistic tradition. While often praising the virtues of meekness, poverty, and powerlessness, the Christian and Moslem empires never had to face this dilemma as actually applying to all their adherents. And while there have been many Christian and Moslem martyrs, the significance of martyrology for them has never been central as has the concept of *Kiddush Hashem* or dying for the sanctification of God's name, in Jewish tradition.

Jewish powerlessness affected Jewish and also Christian and, to a lesser extent, Moslem theology. Jews interpreted their powerlessness as due punishment for their sins; *mipnei ĥata-einu galinu me-arzeinu*, we were exiled because of our sins sums up the paramount principle of Jewish suffering. Jews suffer because they are politically powerless and they are politically powerless because of their sins. Christians, too, agreed that Jews were exiled because of their sins, but disagreed on what that sin was. For the Jew, his powerlessness was the central dilemma of his faith while, for the Christian, Jewish powerlessness confirmed the truth of Christianity. Often, Jewish-Christian polemics centered on this issue. The “Letter of Rabbi Samuel,” whether or not a forgery,¹ depicts the length of the

1. See James Parkes, *The Jew in the Medieval Community* (New York: Hermon Press, 1976), pp. 31-32. Parkes believes that it may be a true letter, agreeing with Lukyn Williams in *Adversus Judaeos* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1935), pp. 228-231. On the other hand, Steinschneider (in an article in the Bodleian Catalogue, 1852-1860, S.W. Samuel Marokki coll. 2436-2451), insists that this was a 14th century fake.

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exile and the lack of restoration and then concludes with the truth of the Christian doctrine. And the Moslem theologian Ibn Hazam confronted Samuel Hanagid with the oft-used phrase of *Genesis* 49:10 — “The Scepter shall not depart from Judah” — contrasting it with Jewish powerlessness.² Not for nought did Hasdai Ibn Shaprut write to the king of the Khazars, a powerful people living in Southern Russia which converted to Judaism in the eighth century, about the joy he felt upon learning of a Jewish kingdom which wielded power and dominion. For, he wrote:

We have been cast down from our glory, so that we have nothing to reply when they say daily unto us, “Every other people has its kingdom, but of yours there is no memorial on the earth.” Hearing, therefore, the fame of my lord the King, as well as the power of his dominions, and the multitude of his forces, we were amazed, we lifted up our head, our spirit revived, and our hands were strengthened, and the kingdom of my Lord furnished us with an argument in answer to this taunt. May this report be substantiated; for that would add to our greatness.

Blessed be the Lord of Israel who has not left us without a kinsman as defender nor suffered the tribes of Israel to be without an independent kingdom. May my Lord the King prosper for ever. . . .³

Nevertheless, Jewish power was the exception, powerlessness the rule. Yehuda Bauer, an outstanding Holocaust expert, acknowledged this fact when he entitled one of his books, *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979). It describes “the gradual emergence of the Jewish people from total political powerlessness — a development stretching over nearly 100 years and culminating in the consolidation of the State of Israel.”

As a central theme of Jewish existence, powerlessness has clearly influenced and even basically shaped Jewish psychology and theology. As a religion, Judaism would clearly advocate trust in God at times of adversity; indeed, trust in God in adversity becomes a crucial, if not *the* crucial attitude to God in Jewish theology. If the spiritual failed to protect him, the Christian knew that the temporal always could; not so the Jew. He had no such fallback position. The Jew was always faced with the plaintive cry of the Mainz community during the First Crusade: “Do not remove yourself from us, for adversity is almost upon us *and there is no one to aid us*”⁴ (*italics mine*). While the God of the Christian and the Moslem is the God of the powerful (for the Christian, beginning in the fourth century and encompassing most of Europe, and for the Moslem, beginning in the sev-

2. Discussed in Eliyahu Ashtor, *The Jews of Moslem Spain* (Phila.: Jewish Publication Society, 1979), Vol. 2, pp. 54-55.

3. Quoted by Curt Leviant, ed., *Masterpieces of Hebrew Literature; A Treasury of 2,000 Years of Jewish Creativity* (New York: KTAV, 1969), p. 164. Even if forged, it still reflects the feelings of the era.

4. Shlomo Eidelberg, tr. and ed., *The Jews and the Crusaders* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), p. 24.

enth century and encompassing the Arabian Peninsula and Northern Africa), the Jew's God is a different breed of God.

The Pentateuch specifically stresses this aspect of Jewish existence. Abraham departs from a relatively secure life to wander, in exile, in a strange new land without protection, unable even to defend the integrity of his own family from the lusts of powerful kings. (The only exception is the account of the War between the Kings in Genesis 14.) Isaac, too, is compelled to wander, and fears for his life because of his wife. Jacob also lives in exile, flees that exile pursued by a powerful antagonist and escapes, only to be faced with his more powerful brother. The rest of the Pentateuch concentrates on the powerless slave nation, Israel, saved not by their own efforts but through the grace of an omnipotent God. This Biblical paradigm of the powerful God saving the powerless Jew shapes Jewish theology in a much more intensive manner than it does either Christian or Moslem theology. Most Jewish festivals are tied to God's rescue of his People — Passover, Sukkot, Hanukkah and Purim are the best examples. The last paragraph of the *Shema* series, one of the most crucial Jewish prayers, ends with "I am the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be for you God. I am the Lord, your God." And the "Eighteen Benedictions" (actually 19), recited three times each day, devote approximately half of the blessings to the idea of future redemption.

The Jewish religion developed precisely in response to powerlessness. Because the Jewish God is the God of the powerless, the Christian-Moslem challenge stressing Jewish powerlessness completely missed the point. Powerlessness does not undermine the Jewish belief system — it supports it. Jewish faith in God derives from a condition of powerlessness that Christianity and Islam lack and *the God of the Jews differs totally from His Christian and Moslem counterpart*. To the conventional religious individual, either Christian or Moslem, his religion's temporal success and the "competition's failure" proves that God is "on his side;" oil wealth is Allah's blessing and reward to his believers. Both religions foster a strong strain of Calvinist theology: success proves virtue; failure reveals wickedness. By contrast, while Jews believe that any blessing derives from God, they also ascribe evil to Him. The Talmudic tractate Berakhot (33b & 54a) states:

If one [in praying] says . . . Be thy name mentioned for well-doing . . . he is silenced . . . because this implies for the good only and not for the bad and we have learned, "A man must bless God for the evil as he blesses him for the good."

Elie Wiesel develops this theme in a modern context in *The Gates of the Forest* (1966) indicating that Jewish "blasphemy" in "crediting God with evil as well as absolution" distinguishes Jews from Christians.⁵ Jewish belief, instead of viewing powerlessness as a challenge to its truth, incorporates it

5. E. Wiesel, *The Gates of the Forest* (New York: Avon, 1966), p. 101.

into its theology. Not that the Jew prefers powerlessness and insecurity, but they impel him to have faith in God.

A caveat is necessary here. Christianity and Islam also suffered defeat and domination and surrendered martyrs to the altar of religious intolerance. While Christians believe that "whom God loves, He smites," as of course do Jews,⁶ in Christianity, it applies only to the religious individual, while in Judaism it covers the entire nation. Basically, Christianity and Islam have always been concerned with evangelism, with converting the world, their own existence never in doubt; Judaism has been concerned chiefly with survival, consistently hanging on to the slenderest of threads and that with sheer tenacity. This basic fact of history, rather than the formal theologies of each faith, colors their perceptions of themselves and their God.

What, then, are the specific attributes of this Jewish God who flourishes in powerlessness? Perhaps the best response appears in those documents depicting Jewish powerlessness at its extreme, the elegies of persecution.

In 586 B.C.E., the Babylonians destroyed the First Temple in Jerusalem, thus completing the destruction of Jewish political independence. In 70 C.E., the Romans destroyed the Second Temple, ending Jewish political sovereignty for nearly 1900 years in what Richard Rubinstein has termed, "the most decisive Jewish catastrophe before Auschwitz." On the anniversary of the destruction of both Temples, Jews recite elegies from the *Kinot*. The catastrophes inspired Jewish reaffirmations of faith.

One thousand years after the destruction of the Second Temple, in 1096, the Crusaders, on their way to liberate Jerusalem from the Moslem infidel, decided not to "do the whole thing backwards" and massacred numerous Jews in the Rhineland who, however, left us several elegies: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, *The Chronicle of Rabbi Eliezer bar Nathan* (which concentrated on the events in Mainz and Cologne), and the *Narrative of the Old Persecutions* or the *Mainz Anonymous* (which stressed the events at Mainz and Worms). In 1146, the Second Crusade led to massacres of Jews, although on a lesser scale, because it was better organized by the political and Papal leadership and because of the influence of St. Bernard of Clairvaux. Nevertheless, many died in the Rhenish communities and Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn composed the *Sefer Zekhirah* or the *Book of Remembrance*. In addition, these persecutions precipitated special prayers (such as the *Av Haraḥamim* or "Father of Mercy" prayer). Jewish expulsion from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in 1497 prompted Joseph Hacoheh to describe Jewish history as a "Vale of Tears." Later, the Chmelnitski massacres of 1648-50 (which decimated Polish Jewry) inspired Nathan Hannover to compose his *Even Mezuḥah*. Finally, the Holocaust of 1941-45, which destroyed one-third of the Jewish people, six

6. Proverbs, 3:12.

million souls, unleashed another torrent of literature, including some works which attempted to relate the tragedy to God and to synchronize contemporary events with traditional Jewish belief. Some of these important works include Martin Buber's *Eclipse of God*, Abraham J. Heschel's *God in Search of Man*, and Eliezer Berkovits' *Faith After the Holocaust*.

This essay will examine various Jewish theological responses to powerlessness. To this end, it will concentrate on the literature referred to above. Composed either on the heels of tragedy or as an explanation for tragedy, these works confronted the theological implications of powerlessness most directly. Obviously, they reflect differing periods and different perspectives, Ashkenazic and Sefardic, Talmudic and Kabbalistic, medieval and modern, Orthodox and Conservative. And yet, whatever their varying orientations, the central issue of God's role in tragedy starkly confronted all of them. If they did not desire to adopt Richard Rubinstein's conclusions that, in the wake of the Holocaust, the God of history is dead, they had to develop another role for God. Surprisingly, despite their divergent periods and perspectives, their depictions of God can be classified into several major themes which continually recur.

The first major aspect of God, stressed in times of danger, is His role as Saviour. God is to see the peril of His people and save them in their present hour of danger, the immediate crisis. In depicting accounts of the prayers, the authors often end with such generalized happy endings as, "Their prayers were accepted and the Merciful God saved them."⁷ This tradition continued throughout the ages; whenever Jews survived a clear and present danger they automatically ascribed it to God's intervention in his role as Saviour. Thus, Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, describing a miraculous escape during the Second Crusade in the *Sefer Zekhirah* attributes it to "The Lord, [who] being merciful to us, permitted a remnant to survive on the earth and enabled us to remain alive . . ."⁸ The same theme reverberated through the centuries; in August 1708, the Tzar checked a military riot against the Jews of Mstislavl and the local *kahal pinkas* (journal) naturally ascribes it to divine intervention. "And if the Lord Almighty had not put it into the heart of the Tzar to enter our synagogue in his own person, blood would certainly have been shed. It was only with the help of God that the Tzar saved us and took revenge for us. . . ."⁹

Yet God did not always come through; thousands, millions of Jews perished, many in unspeakably horrible ways. Without considering the problems that this raised in justifying God, the religious believer nevertheless discovered in another aspect of God possibilities for maintaining Jewish sanity, even if not for surviving. For powerlessness is debilitating

7. Eidelberg, p. 101.

8. Ibid., p. 122.

9. S.M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland; From the Earliest Times until the Present Day*, tr. J. Friedlander (New York: KTAV, 1975) Vol. 1, p. 248.

not only physically but psychologically. It is one thing to be unable to prevent the raping of one's wife and murder of one's children, it is quite another to renounce all hope for future vengeance — and to whom does vengeance belong if not to God?

The theme of vengeance appears in the *Kinot*, the lamentations read on the Ninth of Av, the anniversary of the destruction of both Temples and the symbolic day to commemorate all Jewish suffering. One particularly fervent elegy is attributed to Rabbi Kolonymous ben Judah of the eleventh century.

Make known to our sight the avenging of the blood of thy servants O Lord, God of vengeance, shine forth, O God of vengeance! Wreak my vengeance upon them that afflicted me, it is a time of vengeance to plead my cause, O zealous and avenging God. O Lord, go forth like a hero . . . break the arm of the wicked and of the evil . . . let him who kindled the fire make full restitution . . . Will you not take vengeance on such? . . . is it not for that reason that You are called "Man of War?" . . . For the blood of your servants that had been shed and for the ruins of the Temple, O avenge the Children of Israel! Count the drops of my blood, counting each single one; show yourself in your purple with their lifeblood stained upon your garments; execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses.¹⁰

The theme of vengeance also reverberates throughout the martyrologies of the Crusades, especially in depictions of massacres in which God as Saviour failed; the contemporary *Av Haraḥamim* prayer also appeals to God as Avenger. Describing other persecutions, Joseph Hacoen in his *Emek Ha-Bakkah* concludes his descriptions with a call for Divine vengeance; similarly, Nathan Hannover, in depicting the 1648-50 massacres in Poland often concludes with "May God avenge their blood." Perhaps Zvi Kolitz expresses this theme best when he has Yossel Rakover write, during the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt, that "Vengeance was and always will be . . . the greatest spiritual release of the oppressed."¹¹

Naturally enough, whenever the enemy suffered defeat, Jews ascribed it to God's vengeance; from Solomon bar Simson's ascription of the death of the anti-Semitic mayor of Cologne to "the jealous and vengeful God,"¹² to the *Sefer Zekhirah*'s depiction of the end of the Crusaders, the same theme stands out — "The hand of the Lord was upon any evil doer who had laid hands upon a Jew."¹³ Nor was the theme of the avenging God empty rhetoric, meant solely for Jewish consumption. Capsali, in describing the efforts of Don Isaac Abravanel and Abraham Senior to avert the Spanish edict of expulsion, quotes a letter to Queen Isabel:

He wrote that the Lord, be He blessed, will wreak the vengeance of the Jews

10. *Kinot*, no. 31.

11. Zvi Kolitz, "Yossel Rakover's Appeal to God." quoted in Albert H. Friedlander, ed., *Out of the Whirlwind: A Reader of Holocaust Literature* (New York: Schocken, 1976), p. 394.

12. Eidelberg, p. 61.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

upon her and her house and much more in that vein. He reminded her of all those who had done evil unto Israel, and they perished in the end.¹⁴

The Christian contrast of the New Testament God of Love to the Old Testament God of Vengeance completely missed the point; the Christian could depict his God as love because he was not faced with the gnawing insecurity and frustration of powerlessness. The Jew, on the other hand, constantly confronted with threats and persecutions, yet forced to sublimate his desire for revenge, needed to evoke a vengeful God in order to preserve his sanity, to say nothing of his self-respect. Thus, the "vengefulness" of the Jewish God hardly represented a more "primitive aspect" of God; instead, it responded to the Jewish dilemma of powerlessness.

Religious depictions follow and fulfill political needs. Certainly within Judaism, the political situation has played a crucial, sometimes determining role in various central tenets, including seemingly esoteric theological issues. This merely reaffirms Durkheim's observation that religions reflect their societies; a society's experiences will determine the gods that it keeps. Religion, he observed, "is something eminently social. Religious representations are collective representations which express collective realities . . ."¹⁵ A smiling god may be quite appropriate for one people, a frowning god for another. The attempt by one religious group forcibly to impose its definition of social and political reality on another with a differing conception of reality is bound to fail. The only hope for success is to integrate the target group into the host society so that it will gradually adopt the latter's definition of social and political reality.

Hence, the theme of an avenging God proved particularly effective within the Jewish political and social reality. Therefore, the Jew first prayed to God as a Saviour prior to the tragedy and, if the Lord failed to save him, the Jew, on the heels of the tragedy, would beseech God as an Avenger. Yet here, too, God often failed.

Even then, all was not lost; God could also be the Redeemer. Appeals for redemption reflect the classical messianic aspirations; in contrast to God as Saviour who saves His people from the present danger, appeals to God as Redeemer call for the long-run, future all-embracing redemption of Israel by the messiah. The spontaneous anxiety and anger reflected in God's roles as Saviour and Avenger are missing in God as Redeemer; instead, redemption features the traditional formulas including an end to the exile, the return to the Land of Israel, and the rebuilding of the Temple. Thus, Solomon bar Simson implores God as Redeemer to "deliver us from the exile of wicked Edom speedily in our day, and may our Messiah

14. Capsali, *Likkutim*, ed. Mattes, 70-72. Quoted and discussed in Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *The Lisbon Massacre of 1506 and the Royal Image in the Shebet Yehudah* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1960), p. 56.

15. Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1963), Introduction.

come, Amen . . .,”¹⁶ while the Mainz Anonymous concludes with the plea, “May the Lord rescue us from this exile.”¹⁷

And yet God failed.

This blatant truth demanded an answer: God had not saved the victims, revenge was limited in scope, and Jews are still awaiting the full redemption. Where, then, was God’s commitment? It is a serious mistake, consistently propagated by many pious apologists for religion, that the ancient religious individual had no questions or problems with his faith. Modern man, tainted as he may be by the sin of secularism, is not the first to ask heretical questions. In fact, such questions about God’s justice cropped up in all places and at all times. One of the greatest Talmudic rabbis, Elisha ben Abuya, often called “the other” in Talmudic lore, adopted the traditional Jewish expression of apostasy, “*Let din ve-let dayan*” (there is no justice and there is no judge) when he saw a righteous person who died before his time. Certainly, the witnesses who recorded the horrors of the Crusades could not help being struck by God’s inaction and raise the appropriate questions.

The martyrologies, too, reflect puzzlement at God’s silence, especially in light of the Biblical emphasis upon a powerful God acting within history. Solomon bar Simson records the cry of the Mainz Jews: “Where are all the wonders which our forefathers related to us, saying: ‘Did you not bring us up out of Egypt and from Babylonia and rescue us on numerous occasions?’ How then have you forsaken and abandoned us, O Lord . . .” While “no prophet, seer, or man of wise heart was able to comprehend” the slaughter, he concluded that “It must be stated with certainty that God is a righteous Judge and we are to blame.”¹⁸ There could be “no questioning the ways of the Holy One.”¹⁹ The *Sefer Zekhirah* concludes:

What recompense can be made for Rabbi Akiba and his colleagues? But no! We cannot question the ways of Him who is fearful and awesome. We must always declare His righteousness. It is we who have sinned. . . .²⁰

What, indeed, could the theologian possibly say? The three Biblical-Talmudic primary themes of God as Saviour, Avenger, and Redeemer, a role He had played from the time of the Exodus, could survive the Crusades; but the events in Spain during the late fourteenth and throughout the fifteenth century, culminating in the expulsion in 1492, overwhelmed them. Hence, Jewish thinkers developed a fourth option — God as powerless, a view deriving its roots from traditional Midrashic literature. The *Midrash Rabbah* on Exodus talks about the exile of the Shekhinah, or God’s presence, together with Israel, “Whence do we know that the She-

16. Eidelberg, p. 48.

17. Ibid., p. 115.

18. Ibid., pp. 24-25.

19. Ibid., p. 31.

20. Ibid., p. 133.

khinah accompanied Israel in exile? Because it says, 'For your sake I was sent to Babylon' (Isa. 43:14)."²¹ *Lamentations Rabbah* (I.19,45) observes that "When they were exiled to Elam the Shekhinah was with them . . . When they were exiled to Greece the Shekhinah was with them."²² Hence, in response to the destruction of the Temple and the beginning of the exile, Jews developed the concept of God in exile with them. God also suffered the pain of the people Israel. However, it was left to Issac Luria to develop fully this depiction of God as powerless. The Lurianic Kabbalah, groping to respond to the Spanish catastrophe, seized on this ancient theme of powerlessness and developed it into a major Jewish mystical system. According to Issac Luria, the first act of creation, or pre-creation, was *Zimzum*, or God's withdrawal into Himself to leave a void for creation. This voluntary withdrawal can be interpreted, as by Gershon Scholem, as the deepest symbol of exile, an exile into Himself to leave a relatively God-less area for the world. The first act of creation requires God's limitation of Himself and, in order for things to exist, God must hold Himself back. Secondly, Luria stresses that *Tikkun*, or restoration of all the scattered lights and sparks from their shells, is a function of men's action. The Jew, by his action, can hinder or accelerate restoration of the original divine harmony. The *Tikkun* even restores the unity of God's name which was destroyed by the original defect, the "breaking of the vessels" and the consequent powers of evil and sin. Furthermore, Scholem writes:

In an age in which the historical exile of the people was a terrible and fundamental reality of life, the old idea of an exile of the Shekhinah gained a far greater importance than ever before . . . The exile of the Shekhinah is not a metaphor, it is a genuine symbol of the "broken" state of things in the realm of divine potentialities . . .²³

Both concepts, *Zimzum* and *Tikkun*, operate with a relative divine powerlessness, whether voluntary or not. God, who is all in all, withdraws from an area, hence lessening his influence and power over it, or, God needs the help of man, specifically the Jew, to help him reunite with His Shekhinah. This concept of *Zimzum* represents an extension of Jewish powerlessness, in a relative sense, to God. This, then, is the fourth face of God, (as per Ezekiel's vision),²⁴ perhaps a product of the failure of the first three faces: the Powerless God. Originally, Jews perceived themselves as powerless and God as powerful, as Saviour, Avenger, and Redeemer. Gradually, however, Jewish theology extended the concept of powerlessness up to God, at least relatively speaking.

Until the present, few theologians have forthrightly faced the prob-

21. *Midrash Rabbah, Exodus*, 23:5, tr. S.M. Lehrman (London: Soncino Press, 1939), p. 283.

22. *Midrash Rabbah, Lamentations*, I,19,54, tr. J. Rabbinowitz (London: Soncino Press, 1939), p. 144.

23. Gershon G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1961), pp. 244-286.

24. Ezekiel, Chapter 1.

lem of the Holocaust. To a degree, however, both Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel have hinted at God's relative powerlessness, or partial dependence upon man as one way to approach this theological timebomb. Buber observes that man is not merely a creature of God but a co-creator with God; man is able not only to alter the fate of the world, a traditional theme within Jewish thought, but he is also able to reunite God with His exiled Shekhinah, as claimed in the Kabbalah. Man's life would have no meaning if man were merely dependent; instead, as Buber writes, "The world is not divine sport, it is divine destiny."²⁵ Or, as he points out in *I and Thou*:

You know always in your heart that you need God more than everything; but do you not know too that God needs you — in the fullness of His eternity needs you? . . . You need God, in order to be — and God needs you, for the very meaning of your life.²⁶

Buber also, in discussing the Eclipse of God, observes that the I-It relationship has the power to step in and shut off the light of heaven. The eclipse is not merely in human subjectivity but in Being itself. Hence, to a degree, God needs man and man has the power to cause an eclipse of God which is precisely the character of the historical hour.²⁷ Heschel also discusses this issue in his volume, entitled appropriately *God in Search of Man*.

The earth is the Lord's, and God is in search of man. He endowed man with power to conquer the earth, and His honor is upon our faith. We abused His power, we betrayed His trust . . . Religion is not . . . for man alone but a plea of God and a claim of man, God's expectation and man's aspiration . . .²⁸

If God has abdicated His power in order to give man freedom, God is, therefore, powerless, or lacks power in certain areas of men's lives. Eliezer Berkovits, in *Faith After the Holocaust*, advocates such a theodicy.

. . . [T]he question as to God's presence in history is raised on the assumption that the fear of God ought to subdue the enemies of God and the power of God ought to protect God's people. The answer is based on a radical redefinition of the concepts of the fear and the might of God. The mightiness of God is shown in his tolerance of the mocking of his enemies; it is revealed in his long-suffering. . . . it is impossible for God to be present in history by using his physical omnipotence. . . . *Man can only exist because God renounces the use of his power on him.* This, of course, means that God cannot be present in history through manifest material power. . . . The rabbis in the Talmud saw the mightiness of the Almighty in that he controls his inclination to judge and to punish and behaves in history as if he were powerless. . . . God

25. Maurice S. Friedman, *Martin Buber; The Life of Dialogue* (New York: Harper/Torchbooks, 1955), p. 71.

26. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, tr. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1958), p. 80f.

27. Martin Buber, *The Eclipse of God*, tr. Maurice Friedman *et al.* (New York: Harper, 1952), pp. 165ff.

28. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man; A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Harper, 1966), pp. 286-287.

is mighty, for he shackles his omnipotence and becomes “powerless” so that history may be possible²⁹ (*italics mine*).

“Man can only exist because God renounces the use of his power on him.” The crux of the issue brings us full circle, back to the concept of “punishment (exile) for our sins.” If the Jews were punished because of their sins then God apparently is acting within the world, but what then happens to free will? On the other hand, if God renounces the use of his power on man, if God is indeed powerless, then He does not act within the world and what is the point of praying to and/or trusting in Him? And if God renounces His power over man then He cannot have punished Israel because “of its sins.” What, then, happens to the entire Deuteronomic sequence, especially chapter 28, which promises rewards for men’s good deeds and punishments for their sins?

Released from hope of a God who interferes with contingency, modern man may achieve a more nearly mature concept of Godhead and of self. Or, perhaps, we should abandon the concept of divine meaning for human existence and stress exclusively God’s role as the determiner of ultimate values and truths? Such a theology would take into account scientific discoveries which render individual providence unlikely, and thus permit recognition that the Deity has engendered principles governing the universe and pointing toward certain ultimate values. Or, perhaps, to carry the argument further, the Deity disappears from ultimate values as well, becoming value-neutral as science is value-neutral.

Pragmatically, God-given values provide a useful fiction for man in his attempts, as Peter Berger would have it, to cosmicize the social order.³⁰ But, if one bases theology on human utility rather than on reality, one could argue that the concept of a caring and helping God is even more useful than that of a value-determining God; yet God’s cure and help are inconceivable in the face of divine powerlessness. Therefore, utility must give way to the larger concept, the consequences of the Jewish idea of a powerless God.

If one cannot trust a powerless God, why retain the concept? One reason arises from the psychological need for frustration-avoidance. Stricken with the debilitating condition of powerlessness, man needs an out. The frustration-avoidance idol gives him the feeling not of security but of doing something — no matter how fruitless. To hope and trust in a powerless God, though itself the height of futility, nevertheless represents a response to futility, a way of doing something.

Indeed, Freud observed that not only does man need God because of his helplessness and his consequent need of a protecting father throughout his life, but he also observed that primitive religions humanized nature so at least to believe that he was no longer totally paralyzed before

29. Eliezer Berkovits, *Faith After the Holocaust* (New York: KTAV, 1973), pp. 108-109.

30. Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (New York: Anchor, 1969), Chapter I.

nature's whims.³¹ If the reality of powerlessness is frustrating, the recognition of that reality is devastating.

The U.N. provides a practical, secular parallel. Third World Nations, though not expecting the U.N. to serve their practical ends, nevertheless have frequent recourse to that august Body. Because the African States cannot eliminate South African apartheid by force of arms, they pass condemnatory resolutions. Because the Arab States cannot militarily destroy Israel, they censure her in the international forum — thereby both concealing powerlessness and relieving frustrations born of powerlessness.

The concept of a powerless God, then, has peculiar implications for the latter half of the twentieth century. Just as Judaism blazed the monotheistic path which Christianity and Islam were to follow, so Judaism, in acknowledging a powerless God, has again blazed the trail by perceiving a completely new identity for the deity. Today, when man, on the brink of a nuclear holocaust, increasingly feels total helplessness, the model of God as a frustration-avoidance idol may become crucial. In the face of the Bomb we are all Jews — all of us insecure and powerless. The term "holocaust" used to describe the potential nuclear Armageddon, echoes the term describing Jewish extermination by Nazi Germany. Powerlessness has become all but universal, obliging many to regard the Jewish doctrine of a powerless God as a way to maintain our sanity. Just as Christianity and Islam followed Judaism into monotheism, so, today, they may follow it in acknowledging powerlessness and adopt God as an idol.

Indeed, Christian theology has already begun to turn in this direction. It is hardly an accident that this theme was expressed by Dietrich Bonhoeffer when he was imprisoned by the Nazis and afterwards executed in the Flossenbergl concentration camp. This "Jewish" experience convinced the Christian theologian to conclude:

God lets himself be pushed out of the world on to the cross. He is weak and powerless in the world, and that is precisely the . . . only way, in which he is with us and helps us. Matt. 8.17 makes it quite clear that Christ helps us, not by virtue of his omnipotence, but by virtue of his weakness and suffering. Here is the decisive difference between Christianity and all religions. Man's religiosity makes him look in his distress to the power of God in the world: God is the *deus ex machina*. The Bible directs man to God's powerlessness and suffering; only the suffering God can help. To that extent we may say that the development toward the world's coming of age outlined above, which has done away with a false conception of God, opens up a way of seeing the God of the Bible, who wins power and space by his weakness. This will probably be the starting-point for our "secular interpretation."³²

31. Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, tr. W.D. Rosbon-Scott (New York: 1955), pp. 21-25.

32. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison: The Enlarged Edition* (New York: Macmillan, 1953), pp. 360-361 (Tegel, 16 July, 1944).

Lessons from the Holocaust

Review Essay by HANS O. TIEFEL

Generations of the Holocaust. Eds., MARTIN S. BERGMANN and MILTON E. JUCOVY, New York. Basic Books, Inc., 1981. xiv+338 pp., \$18.95.

Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era? Reflections on the Holocaust. Ed., EVA FLEISCHNER. New York. KTAV Publishing House, 1977. xv+469 pp., \$22.50.

GENERATIONS OF THE HOLOCAUST OFFERS CONTRIBUTIONS by thirteen authors, all but one of whom are psychoanalysts, describing and interpreting the traumata of children of survivors and of perpetrators of the Holocaust. Using in-depth case studies, the authors explain how survivors' suffering, loss, powerlessness, pent-up aggressions, fears, and violated self-images affect their children. Contrary to the modern belief in individual autonomy, these studies make a persuasive case that we tend to be more dependent upon parents, husbands, wives, and children than we care to acknowledge or admit. The proverb quoted and rejected in Jeremiah 31:29-30, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge," seems to hold true in these cases — less in the sense of personal guilt than in regard to suffering.

Children of survivors suffer because they may feel that they are "replacing" a lost child, that they owe something which must be repaid for being alive, that they can never be as perfect as the destroyed "sibling." The plight of this sense of obligation appears repeatedly in these essays and is poignantly expressed in one sub-title, "On trying to be a dead, beloved child" (298). Children may feel burdened by the thought that they are living proof of the worth of the Jewish seed, the living affirmation of their parents' intent to defy genocidal Nazi aims. Offspring may be weighed down by the thought that they must be perfect children to honor this parental intent, to justify the parents' very survival and to do credit to the memory of children lost in the Holocaust. Survivors' children may not feel free to live their own lives but are constrained by obligations not of their own making.

And, yet, this burden of the past appears not only to be thrust upon the second generation but seems to be sought out. Children tend to be

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preoccupied with the suffering of their parents; they relive their parents' past, feeling a need to repeat the fate of their parents. Children also may face their parents' repressed hostilities that may lead to child abuse. A father or mother may call a child "a little Hitler," or he or she may say that the conduct of the child is worse than anything the parent experienced in the camps. No wonder that the child suffers.

A book written by healers may, of course, mislead in the sense that these cases all focus on trauma and illness, disregarding healthy adaptations by both survivors and their offspring. Also, this summary of the book's themes may mislead, since these topics have been gleaned from a great number of case studies and do not reflect any coherent arrangement within this anthology. One chapter, on the German indemnification policy of Jewish survivors, does not fit into this collection at all. For the rest, the reader misses the guiding hand of an editor who might bring order and progression to these fifteen chapters, who would insist on common foci, prevent repetition, and insist on lay terms.

The reader gets the impression that he is observing psychoanalysts speaking to other psychoanalysts, each acknowledging a common obligation to Freud, relying little on the work of his or her colleagues, and caring nothing about communicating with a non-professional audience. The editors provide a bibliography and an index, but they offer no glossary of terms for such expressions as "counter-transference," "narcissistic self-cathexis," or "oral incorporation and anal-sadistic offensive maneuvers." This reviewer wondered, for example, whether "superego pathology" means that the conscience is ill and whether "ego-split" refers to a divided mind or to schizophrenia.

Use of such technical terms also raises the basic question of methodology. Psychoanalysis finds the causes of psychological disorders of adults in childhood, an assumption that may be justified here. But psychoanalysis also suffers from a bad case of medical paternalism in always knowing the patient's mind and behavior better than he or she. Moreover, the key to such superior insight is Freudian and is, therefore, largely sexual. It may well be true that sexual problems result from childhood trauma of survivors' children, but this lay reader could not help but wonder whether such categories are the most helpful terms for analyzing and interpreting either survivor parents or their children.

Interpretation and therapy could be offered in other than psychoanalytic methods. Professional self-criticism should acknowledge the questionable nature of some analytic terms and assumptions as well as the tentative quality of the results. For, surely, in this context, psychoanalysis is more art than science. In short, the book suffers from repetition, lack of organization, highly technical language, and a methodology in need of analysis. But it also offers revealing descriptions and occasional helpful insights into the effects of survivor parents on their own children. It shows that the children of victims have themselves been victimized. It

presents thorough cases studies that will be a helpful resource to professionals in psychoanalysis. And it may yield helpful clues for understanding and treating other kinds of psychological trauma.

Generations of the Holocaust focuses upon suffering, as does *Auschwitz*. The former is a psychoanalytic, the latter a theological study. One seeks to describe and to understand suffering inflicted by parent upon child; the other reverses that order and seeks to comprehend and to treat the hostility of the child — Christianity — toward its historical parent — Judaism. *Auschwitz*, however, proves to be more self-conscious and self-critical about its methodology. For the Holocaust has forced theologians, in contrast to psychoanalysts, to question their most fundamental methods and assumptions. The Holocaust cannot simply be grist for the theological mill. And *Auschwitz* is one of the first books that expresses the radical demands placed upon theological method by the Holocaust. Its painful honesty and self-searching have made this book into an indispensable reference source. The challenge of its essays has persuaded others to respond to, and continue, the reflections initiated here.

Such success is difficult to achieve in an anthology of ten major themes and twenty-six contributors. These essays were initially presented at the International Symposium on the Holocaust in New York in 1974 and the format followed in the book is to offer a major paper on each of the themes, with two responses. Both the authors of major papers and the responders are among the best in the field, which goes far to explain the success of the book. There is little that should have been left out, and the reader can only conclude that it must have been a remarkable conference indeed!

The contributors are both Jews and Christians, and the format of responses to each address creates occasional continuity of issues. It would have been helpful, however, to have a record of some of the questions and conversations that must have followed the formal papers. Such less guarded but also more frank discussions are apt to offer insights into assumptions and tentative conclusions that may not find their way into formal presentations.

A certain inevitable awkwardness exists in discussions between Jews and Christians. Everyone acknowledges that Christian theology and ethics fostered centuries of anti-Judaism and is partly to blame for the Holocaust and for the passivity of the Christian churches during those horrible events. But how far should revisions go? What guilt should the Christian offspring acknowledge for betraying its Jewish parent?

Surprisingly, Christian participants call for deeper changes in Christian self-understanding and traditions than do their Jewish counterparts. Rosemary Ruether, for example, claims that anti-Semitism (racial hatred) springs directly from Christian theological anti-Judaism, which is itself the left hand of Christology. According to Ruether, the flaw is inevitable

and lies at the very heart of the Gospel. But the Jewish historian Yosef Yerushalmi notes that not the Christian Middle Ages but a secular society produced the Holocaust, that the popes protected Jews, that Ruether's claims are too unqualified. He concludes that the "peculiar ferocity of the abuse of children for a mother is common enough; actual matricide is another matter" (101).

Perhaps Christian participants in such a symposium are self-selective. They are deeply troubled by consistent Christian anti-Judaism and are inclined to call for radical changes in the churches' mission (Gregory Baum), education and liturgy (John T. Pawlikowski). It may be that their apologetic efforts to correct the hateful errors of the past incline them to reduce the truth claims of the Christian faith. It is the special merit of Thomas Hopko, therefore, to resist this trend to give up central aspects of the Christian faith, such as the inherent claim to universality and some sense of messianic fulfillment. Similarly, one may deem it wrong to advocate Christian missions to Jews, but the conviction that Israel is God's first-born and perennial covenant partner need not lead to the self-denial of what is Christian in the Christian faith. I would think that reform and reconstruction must arise from the heart and strength of the Christian faith rather than from relinquishing the substance of faith. Moreover, the reforming and reconciling efforts of these Christian historians and theologians will not penetrate and pervade the churches if it seems that Christianity must lose its soul to save itself from anti-Judaism.

That judgment seems to be shared more by Jewish than by Christian contributors. Thus, Yerushalmi not only rejects Ruether's drastic analysis but writes that he does "not welcome a collective mea culpa from Christendom" (106). And Irving Greenberg states that, for Christians, all of life is lived in reference to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (7). Reforming efforts, I would conclude, must therefore also center in faith claims about Jesus. Greenberg makes a strong case against abandoning the divine in the Jewish community. The same, though for different reasons, should also hold true for Christians. Indeed, it is my judgment that Greenberg's insights, here and elsewhere, more than those of any other Jewish or Christian author, constitute the most helpful resource for doing precisely that. They promise to restore Christian theology to a sounder understanding of its Lord, of its own community, and of its moral responsibility. That recommitment, rather than the question "whether it is morally possible to remain a Christian at all" (Alan T. Davies, 64), seems the sounder course.

In addition to the authors mentioned, *Auschwitz* offers contributions by Fackenheim, Avineri, Rubinoff, and Wiesel. The book is too topically diverse for easy use as a class text. It is too advanced for beginners. But it will stand as a superb and indispensable resource for those who work toward interpreting and learning from the Holocaust and who are constrained to relate this event to theology and faith.

REVIEWS

Earl Shorris' Neoconservative Problem — and Mine.

Jews Without Mercy: A Lament. By EARL SHORRIS. Garden City, New York, Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1982. 191 pp., \$14.95.

Reviewed by SANFORD PINSKER

The Jewish neoconservatives again and again ask why Jews alone, of all people in America, do not pursue the narrow social and political interests of a bourgeois ethnic group. A Jew without the answer to that question has forgotten his name.

— Earl Shorris

AT ONE POINT in Chaim Potok's novel, *The Chosen*, David Malter tries to put a fair-minded, even compassionate, face on the portrait of Hasidic life his son has just read in Graetz's *History of the Jews*:

Graetz was biased, and his sources were not accurate. If I remember him correctly, he calls the Hasidim vulgar drunkards, and he calls the tzaddikim priests of Baal. There is enough to dislike about Hasidism without exaggerating its faults.

The same thing might be said about the neoconservative turn that *Commentary* magazine has taken; there is enough to dislike, to churn into polemics, without resorting to exaggeration — and, I would add, without insisting that all neoconservatives are Jews (they aren't!) or that those who are ought to be drummed out of the tribe. A title like *Jews Without Mercy* makes no bones about its intention to tar the likes of Norman Podhoretz, Irving Kristol and Nathan Glazer with a wide brush. It is less clear why Shorris chose "A Lament" as his sub-title, especially since "A Vendetta" would have been more accurate.

For Shorris, to be a Jew is to be a liberal. And however much we might be sympathetic to that general proposition, it is, at best, a highly selective reading of the Tradition. Moreover — and here is where Shorris misfires badly — his applications of Biblical text have the same sophistication as those of Christian fundamentalists who anchor, and thereby justify, their visions of an impending apocalypse with citations to the Good Book:

Prohibitions against the seeking of power, fame, and wealth appear innumerable times in Jewish literature. The laws of the corners of the field, of gleaning, of the jubilee year, and so on, have the explicit purpose of limiting wealth and redistributing it to achieve greater equality of outcome. The Jewish view of how to treat the poor and the eighteenth-century liberal view (even when it comes from David Ricardo, Smith's Jewish disciple) have nothing in common. Calvinism is a direct contradiction of Hebrew Scripture, which states that God loves the poor (pp. 134-135).

Had Shorris pitched his book to the ultra-Orthodox, perhaps there would be no problem, other than explaining what *Commentary* magazine stands for and who Norman Podhoretz is. But *Jews Without Mercy* raises disturbing questions for those Jews more likely to be familiar with the UJA than YHWH, with IRAs than the agrarian economics of an ancient desert tribe. Again, Shorris insists that the neoconservative agenda is out to replace traditional modes of Jewish mercy with new "badges" of assimilated American-Jewish shame:

Both history and the Law led Jews to sit on the left side of the aisle, to strive for social justice, to trust in equality. Now those long-held ethical principles have been converted by the Jewish neoconservatives into

a new Jew-badge. They have made Jewish ethics reek of sweatshops and communal toilets, of bargaining in the streets and holding union meetings in the hallways and cellars . . . The new Jew-badge is not a yellow star or a yellow hat. It is a picture of Karl Marx or Leon Trotsky or Abraham Cahan or Emma Goldman or the Hollywood Ten or Samuel Gompers. The essence of Judaism has become the badge of shame at being a Jew in the minds of those who would now avoid the disapproval of the majority by escaping into the love of money and power and forgetting the attributes of mercy and loving-kindness that gave Jews to believe man was indeed created in the image of God (p. 74).

For all the shrill insistences about Judaism abandoned, what energizes Shorris is the unhappy fact that many Jewish intellectuals have broken ranks with political liberalism and, apparently, with ethical humanism as well. About less "political" Jews — those who count neither the Hollywood Ten nor the *Commentary* neoconservatives among their *rebbe*s — Shorris is curiously silent. And yet the fact remains that the battle for American-Jewish survival is likely to be fought in Jewish homes and synagogues and community centers, albeit without the flash-and-dazzle we have come to associate with Jewish intellectuals at the political extremes.

To be sure, there have been other, more scholarly treatments of the new alignment formed by disgruntled liberals (e.g. Peter Steinfels' *The Neoconservatives*), but *Jews Without Mercy* is the first book to devote nearly five pages to a list of their "clearly defined tenets." No doubt it will infuriate neoconservatives in good standing. No doubt it was meant to do just that. It is reductive and unfair, playful and provocative. Here are some representative examples:

Jews have escaped their origins and

now enjoy the pleasures of economic security and even of affluence. Therefore Jewish interests have changed; Jews should now hold on to what they have. If the blacks, Hispanics, and other groups of poor people wish to escape their origins, they must do so on their own merits; society is not responsible for correcting past injustices by giving more than equal opportunity to the inheritors of injustice.

Blacks betrayed the Jews, the very people who helped them up out of racism and poverty into their current situation. Blacks are anti-Semitic. Jews should not help blacks anymore, nor should they help other minorities, such as Hispanics, because they will only turn on the Jews as the blacks did.

The State of Israel can do no wrong.

The killing of a Palestinian citizen by an Israeli is a justifiable act of self-defense.

The killing of an Israeli civilian by a Palestinian is an act of terrorism.

Any political position taken by an American Jew is justified if it can be associated with the survival of Israel.

Only left-wing regimes can be totalitarian; right-wing regimes are authoritarian (pp. 11-16).

Two things about this exercise in radical simplification worry me. One is that nothing good can come by such shows of self-indulgence and vulgarity. Shorris has a mean-spirited streak every bit as wide as that of Norman Podhoretz, his neoconservative whipping boy. The other — and more serious — worry is that these neoconservative "essences" are likely to find more sympathetic ears than Shorris imagines, especially since his own politics are so stridently leftist.

But all this said, let me hasten to point out that *Jews Without Mercy* makes no claims to being an aca-

demic study. Rather, it is a meditation about what Shorris feels are traditional Jewish attitudes, one that makes heavier use of autobiographical sketches than scholarly footnotes. And there are, indeed, moments when he writes about the extended Shorris family — his uncles, his son, himself — with grace and effect. But *Jews Without Mercy* is *Nit ahin, nit aher*: neither one thing nor another. It hides in the cracks, dodging the responsibilities of the scholar as well as the obligations of the artist.

I tend to be skeptical about the value of books that generate better, more important discussions than one can find on their pages, but *Jews Without Mercy* may be such a book. It raises questions about what it means to be a Jewish American and how that meaning ought to be translated into political action. It says nothing about prayer — which many would define as “religious action” — or about Jewish study or about the small ethical choices that make up quotidian and, I would insist, *Jewish*, life, but that is to ask Shorris to write a very different book. Those who do not number themselves in the camp that would have urged Shorris not to write this book at all will have something to gain from reading it — that is, if they make wide allowances for his crankiness and take him as a beginning rather than as the final word.

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A Druse Looks at Israel

The West Bank Story: An Israeli Arab's View of Both Sides of a Tangled Conflict. By RAFIK HALABI. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1982. 304 pp., \$12.95

Reviewed by STEVEN BOWMAN

THERE ARE DREAMS and there is reality. There is history and there is truth. There are perceptions and there are causes. There are facts and there are myths.

All of these and more can be found in this controversial book by the well known Israeli Druse journalist, Rafik Halabi, whose career has been that of watchdog and gadfly. If the Hebrew version of the book raised some eyebrows in Israel, we can only be impressed by the volume of material and perceptive analysis that permeate this semi-autobiographical account of one man's journey through the contemporary chaos of nationalist strife in present day Israel.

The contents may be treated under three themes: the career of an Israeli Druse who is a Zionist; the attitudes and aspirations of Israeli Arabs; and the awakening nationalism of Palestinian Arabs as it coalesces around the twin foci of PLO domination and local independence.

The author begins with a brief autobiography which is the framework for outlining the precarious position of the Druse in Israel and the territories (the term is used here as a neutral epithet for the West Bank–Judea and Samaria and Gaza.) The Druse are dissimulationists who survive in the contemporary chaos of the Middle East by an exaggerated loyalty to the regime in power. Israeli Druse are thus loyal to Israel and serve in its armed forces. At the same time, they speak Arabic and, on occasion, are torn by the rousing cry of Arab

nationalism which attempts to seduce their loyalty. It is a difficult cry for the young to ignore, especially when they are reminded of their linguistic and cultural affinities with the Arabs. Yet Druse should not forget that they are different; their religious beliefs are kept secret and both in theology and practice they differ from Islam, Judaism or Christianity. In this respect they are an autonomous ethnic group that is Israeli by choice. Both Israeli Jews and Palestinian Muslims and Christians have misunderstood and occasionally misjudged them.

As an educated Israeli with an influential voice in the television media of Israel, Rafik Halabi has clearly and often pointed out the problems of Israeli occupation for Zionism. Wisely, however, he offers no solution nor does he moralize. Rather, his reporting of the turmoil in the territories and of the use and abuse of Arab labor there recalls the strictures of early Zionist ideologies regarding the problems inherent in the existence of a large non-Jewish population in the land and the moral questions involved in the use of Arab labor. As the first Druse to receive university training in Israel, the author brings a new and unique perspective to Zionist teachings.

As an Israeli Druse, Halabi experiences the status of both the Israeli Jew and the Israeli Arab. While he enjoys the rights and privileges and fulfills the duties of the former, he is also aware of the social discrimination against the latter. He points out that Israel is a predominantly Jewish state and, to him, its inability to integrate the Arabic-speaking population, while historically understandable, is not acceptable if judged against the aspirations of various Zionist leaders. Too often history has not measured up to the messianic dreams of its founders. Perhaps Zionism set too high a

standard. Still, he emphasizes, it is a credit to the state that it has not abandoned its vision despite the vicissitudes that it has undergone in the past thirty-five years. No one of the surrounding states (and only a handful in the world), expresses such heroic principles, let alone tries to implement them juridically and socially.

True, Jews are a more privileged sector in Israel, but this is in part due to the existence of the World Zionist Organization which functions purely in the Jewish sector and as a non-state agency. To date, as Halabi shows, no Arab group has pumped any money into the Israeli Arab sector, and it has lagged accordingly. He suggests that the Arab sector was discriminated against by the state as a result of two factors: the attempt to foster the Jewish nature of the new state and the hostility of Israel's neighbors which forced it to fight five wars in the first twenty-five years of its existence. And despite the recent peace treaty with Egypt, Israel still faces the political hostility and social animosity of other Arab neighbors. The rise of Palestinian nationalism on the West Bank in the last ten to fifteen years has attracted many younger Israeli Arabs as well as some Israeli Druse who use it as a foil in their revolt against the patriarchal authority of the traditional social structure.

The third theme is the situation of the Arabs in the territories and the use of Palestinian nationalism. The author emphasizes that this story is little known and even that which is known is misunderstood in Israel. How much the more so outside of Israel where our information comes from newspaper headlines or biased reports. How little we know of the complicated give-and-take within the daily struggle for political and physical survival. It is in this area that the author's contribution is most man-

ifest. Through revealing vignettes he introduces us to the various persona in the PLO and the local politics of the territories. Each is a unique story cautiously moving from support for Jordan or Egypt's attempted accommodation with Israel to public support for the PLO which continues the tried and true Husseini (Haj Amin and Yassir Arafat) principle of assassination of rivals to effect its political control. What the author seems to suggest, if I am not mistaken, is that the longer the Israelis remain in control — and it is politically and morally detrimental to Israeli society for them to do so — the more likely it is that a local Palestinian option will emerge which will obviate the terror tactics of the PLO. It is this local option that is building up an infra-structure which will determine the fate of the Palestinian national movement.

In this vein the author describes the revolutionary social and economic changes that are bringing the inhabitants of the territories into the twentieth century. Particularly interesting are his comments on the emerging emancipation of the Palestinian woman in the political sphere, a corollary to the increasing social and economic emancipation of the Israeli Arab women. Both are some of the positive side-effects of Israel's example. Others include technological and agricultural training and exposure to modern westernized university education. Traditional Arab society throughout Israel and the territories is struggling with the challenges of modernity; massive changes in the social structure and attitudes of the population will result from this encounter.

So the Zionist revolution has given stimulus to a parallel Palestinian revolution. If the two do not destroy each other in an internecine conflict, they will perforce bring the entire region into the

modern world. Perhaps that is why the former is hated and the latter is feared by Israel's more traditional neighbors. And while these twin nationalist movements are proceeding apace, they are tragically contesting for the same territory, with the religious fanaticism of the Gush Emunim confronting the terrorism of the PLO like twin torches that threaten to ignite the powder kegs of ethnic animosity within the borders of present-day Israel. Halabi ends the book on a note of optimism connected with the birth of his son. That, too, is part of the demographic revolution in the region.

This is a work well worth reading whether one agrees with the author or not. It is solidly packed with information which should enlighten all parties in understanding the background of the problems in the area. Moreover, it shows the complexity of the situation, the force of symbols, and the dangers of the irrationality that dictates too many of the opinions and actions of the participants. In this atmosphere the reader would do well to remember the dilemma of the fence-sitter. The author identifies himself as "an Israeli patriot, though . . . not a Jew," while "Arabs consider me a Palestinian, though I have no desire to become a citizen of an independent Palestinian state — if and when such an entity comes into being." He, at least, will not suffer the fate of Baridan's ass, though he may fall victim to the destructive levelling of extremists who dominate the public scene.

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JOSEPHUS

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